WITHDRAWN

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR 1908

Pacific Christian College Library

4443
268 TARBELL
T179
H

Teacher's Guide to the International Sunday School Lessons-1908

268 T179 v.1908
Tarbell, Martha (Treat).
Tarbell's teachers' guide to the International

FORD & GREEN
Main St. Los Angeles, Cal
Books Bought, Sold and Exchanged

JAMES G. HURST

Hurst Memorial Library
Pacific Christian College
Long Beach, Calif.

James G. Hurst
MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Presented by
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/tarbellsteachers0000mart_s5b3

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

STATUE OF JOHN THE EVANGELIST—*Thorwaldsen*

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

268
T179
H
1908

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
FOR 1908

MARTHA TARBELL, PH. D.

The Bible Text. Words and Phrases Explained. Suggestive Thoughts from Helpful Writers. Light from Oriental Life. The Geographical Background. The Historical Background.

The Approach to the Lesson. Three Lesson Topics with Illustrations. Sentence Sermons. The Bible Its Own Interpreter.

Personal Thoughts. The Lesson Briefly Told. Subjects for Bible Class Discussion. Work to be Assigned.

Suggestions to Teachers. An Analysis of the Gospel of John. An Analysis of the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. Maps, Diagrams, Representations of Ancient Customs, Reproductions from Early Christian Art and from Paintings by Tissot and Other Modern Artists.

4443

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

James G. Hurst
MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Presented by
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Copyright 1907
The Bobbs-Merrill Company

CONTENTS

LESSONS FOR 1908

Studies in the New Testament. The Witness of the Fourth Gospel to Jesus.
Studies in the Old Testament. The United Kingdom. (Saul, David, Solomon.)

	Page
Suggestions to Teachers	i
The Gospel According to John	vi
The Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles	x

FIRST QUARTER

Lesson			Page
I. January	5—The Word Made Flesh	John 1.1-14	1
II. January	12—Jesus and John the Baptist	John 1.25-34	14
III. January	19—Jesus and His First Disciples	John 1.35-49	26
IV. January	26—Jesus Cleanses the Temple	John 2.13-22	36
V. February	2—Jesus the Saviour of the World	John 3.14-21	48
VI. February	9—Jesus and the Woman of Samaria	John 4.19-29	58
VII. February	16—Jesus Heals the Nobleman's Son	John 4.43-54	71
VIII. February	23—Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda	John 5.1-9	81
IX. March	1—Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand	John 6.5-14	91
X. March	8—Jesus the Bread of Life	John 6.26-37	101
XI. March	15—Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind	John 9.1-12	111
XII. March	22—Review		121
XIII. March	29—Temperance Lesson	Prov. 23.29-35	131

SECOND QUARTER

I. April	5—Jesus the Good Shepherd	John 10.1-11	141
II. April	12—The Raising of Lazarus	John 11.32-44	151
III. April	19—Jesus Anointed at Bethany	John 12.1-11	161
IV. April	26—Jesus Teaches Humility	John 13.1-15	171
V. May	3—Our Heavenly Home	John 14.1-14	181
VI. May	10—The Mission of the Holy Spirit	John 16.4-15	191
VII. May	17—Jesus Betrayed and Denied	John 18.1-9, 24-27	201
VIII. May	24—Jesus' Death and Burial	John 19.28-42	211
IX. May	31—Jesus Risen from the Dead	John 20.1-18	221
X. June	7—Jesus Appears to the Apostles	John 20.19-31	231
XI. June	14—The Risen Christ by the Sea of Galilee	John 21.12-23	241
XII. June	21—Review		251
XIII. June	28—Temperance Lesson	Eph. 5.6-21	263

THIRD QUARTER

Lesson			Page
I. July	5—Israel Asks for a King	I Sam. 8.10-22	273
II. July	12—Saul Chosen King	I Sam. 10.17-27	283
III. July	19—Samuel Warns Saul and the People	I Sam. 12.1-5, 13-25	293
IV. July	26—Saul Rejected by the Lord	I Sam. 15.13-28	303
V. August	2—David Anointed at Bethlehem	I Sam. 16.1-13	313
VI. August	9—David and Goliath	I Sam. 17.38-49	323
VII. August	16—Saul Tries to Kill David	I Sam. 18.6-16	333
VIII. August	23—Friendship of David and Jonathan	I Sam. 20.30-42	343
IX. August	30—David Spares Saul's Life	I Sam. 26.17-25	353
X. September	6—Saul and Jonathan Slain in Battle	I Sam. Ch. 31	363
XI. September	13—David Made King Over Judah and Israel	II Sam. 2.1-7, 5.1-5	373
XII. September	20—Review		383
XIII. September	27—Temperance Lesson	Isaiah 5.1-23	393

FOURTH QUARTER

I. October	4—David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem	II Sam. 6.1-12	403
II. October	11—God's Promise to David	I Chron. 17.1-14	413
III. October	18—David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son	II Sam. Ch. 9	423
IV. October	25—The Joy of Forgiveness	Psalm 32	433
V. November	1—Absalom Rebels Against David	II Sam. 15.1-12	443
VI. November	8—David Grieves for Absalom	II Sam. 18.24-33	453
VII. November	15—The Lord Our Shepherd	Psalm 23	463
VIII. November	22—Solomon Anointed King	I Kings 1.32-40, 50-53	473
IX. November	29—World's Temperance Lesson	Isaiah 28.1-13	483
X. December	6—Solomon Chooses Wisdom	I Kings 3.4-15	493
XI. December	13—Solomon Dedicates the Temple	I Kings 8.1-11	503
XII. December	20—Christmas Lesson	Luke 2.8-20	513
XIII. December	27—Review		523

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

FIRST QUARTER

LESSON I

Page

1. The Incarnate Word 6
2. Christ the Interpreter of God 8
3. Receiving or Rejecting Christ 10

LESSON II

1. Behold the Lamb of God that Taketh Away the Sin of the World . 19
2. In Honor Preferring One Another 20
3. Witness Bearing 22

LESSON III

1. Personal Work 30
2. Why Some Christians Are Not Personal Workers 31
3. Prejudice 32

LESSON IV

1. Holiness Becometh Thy House, O Lord, Forever 42
2. Righteous Indignation 43
3. The Courage of Convictions 44

LESSON V

1. God So Loved the World that He Gave His Only Begotten Son . . 52
2. That Whosoever Believeth on Him Should Not Perish, but Have Eternal Life 53
3. The Worth of the Individual 54

LESSON VI

1. If Any Man Thirst, Let Him Come Unto Me and Drink 64
2. Characteristics of True Worship 65
3. The Claims of Jesus 67

LESSON VII

1. A Prophet Hath No Honor in His Own Country 75
2. The Growth of Faith 76
3. Prayer in Time of Trouble 77

LESSON VIII

1. Do the Impossible 85
2. Wilt Thou Be Made Whole? 87
3. Bethesdas of To-Day 88

LESSON IX

1. The Miracles of Jesus 95
2. What God Can Do Through Us 96
3. Being Proved 97

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS—Continued

LESSON X — Page

1. Cupboard Love 104
2. Faith a Work 106
3. I Am the Bread of Life 108

LESSON XI

1. One Thing I Know 115
2. The Night Cometh When No Man Can Work 116
3. I Must Work the Work of Him that Sent Me, While It Is Day . . 117

LESSON XIII

1. At the Last 114
2. It Biteth Like a Serpent and Stingeth Like an Adder 136
3. Contemplation of Evil 136

SECOND QUARTER

LESSON I

1. Christ the Door 145
2. Christ the Good Shepherd 146
3. The Abundant Life 147

LESSON II

1. I Am the Resurrection and the Life 155
2. Christ as a Friend 156
3. Jesus Wept 157

LESSON III

1. Hypocrisy 165
2. How to Measure Values 166
3. Anoint the Living 167

LESSON IV

1. Humility 175
2. A New Commandment 176
3. Christ's Example 178

LESSON V

1. In My Father's House Are Many Mansions 185
2. Jesus the Way, the Truth, and the Life 186
3. The Promises of Answer to Prayer 187

LESSON VI

1. The Expediency of Christ's Departure 194
2. The Holy Spirit 196
3. Filled with the Spirit 197

LESSON VII

1. A Study of Judas 205
2. Peter's Fall 206
3. Peter's Victory 207

LESSON VIII

Page

1. It Is Finished 216
2. Christ Died for Our Sins 217
3. The Old, Old Story 218

LESSON IX

1. I Am He That Liveth, and Was Dead 225
2. Because He Lives, We Shall Live Also 226
3. If, Then, Ye Were Raised Together with Christ, Seek the Things That Are Above 227

LESSON X

1. Doubts 235
2. Blessed Are They Which Have Not Seen, and Yet Have Believed . 236
3. As the Father Hath Sent Me, Even so I Send You 237

LESSON XI

1. Another Chance 245
2. Feed My Lambs 246
3. What Is That to Thee? 247

LESSON XIII

1. Wherein Is Riot 266
2. Walk as Children of Light 268
3. Sing and Make Melody with Your Heart to the Lord 269

THIRD QUARTER

LESSON I

1. By Me Kings Reign, and Princes Decree Justice 277
2. Following the Fashion 278
3. Shirking Responsibility 279

LESSON II

1. He That Ruleth Over Men Must Be Just, Ruling in the Fear of God 287
2. Making the Best of the Inevitable 288
3. Bringing Difficulties to God in Prayer 289

LESSON III

1. Whom Have I Defrauded? 297
2. Only Fear the Lord 298
3. Praying for Others 300

LESSON IV

1. To Obey Is Better than Sacrifice 308
2. Making Excuses 309
3. Penitence, Not for the Sins, but for the Penalty 309

LESSON V

1. Man Looketh on the Outward Appearance, but the Lord Looketh on the Heart 316
2. Lives Set Apart 318
3. In Training 319

LESSON VI — Page

1. Preparing for Victory . . . 328
2. Trusting in God . . . 329
3. Giving God the Glory . . . 329

LESSON VII

1. Self-Centered . . . 337
2. Envy . . . 338
3. Enduring Praise . . . 339

LESSON VIII

1. Control of Anger . . . 348
2. The Need of Friends . . . 349
3. The Power of Friends . . . 350

LESSON IX

1. Magnanimity . . . 357
2. Reverence for Others . . . 358
3. The End Never Justifies the Means . . . 360

LESSON X

1. Prepare to Meet Thy God . . . 368
2. Showing Gratitude . . . 369
3. Enduring Trouble . . . 369

LESSON XI

1. Waiting . . . 377
2. Good Citizenship . . . 377
3. Tact . . . 379

LESSON XIII

1. The Presumptuous . . . 398
2. The Perverse . . . 399
3. The Self-Conceited . . . 400

FOURTH QUARTER

LESSON I

1. Uzzah's Sin . . . 408
2. Obed-edom's Courage . . . 409
3. Enter Into His Courts with Praise . . . 410

LESSON II

1. Spending for Self and Giving to God . . . 416
2. Thou Didst Well that It Was in Thy Heart . . . 418
3. Compensations . . . 419

LESSON III

1. Be Ye Kind One to Another . . . 428
2. Passing It Along . . . 428
3. The Gift Without the Giver Is Bare . . . 429

LESSON IV

Page

1. The Way to Forgiveness 437
2. The Blessing of Forgiveness 438
3. The Consequences of Sin 439

LESSON V

1. Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother 447
2. Provoke Not Your Children to Wrath 448
3. Flattery 450

LESSON VI

1. Is the Young Man Safe? 457
2. Inconsiderate Grief 459
3. Sorrow's Use 460

LESSON VII

1. I Shall Not Want 468
2. Trust That Casteth Out Fear 469
3. The Royal Bounty 470

LESSON VIII

1. King Solomon 477
2. Serve Him with a Willing Mind 479
3. Know Thou the God of Thy Father 480

LESSON IX

1. I Keep Under My Body and Bring It Into Subjection 487
2. Sinning Against Warning 489
3. Precept Upon Precept 490

LESSON X

1. Noble Choices 497
2. Helpful Wisdom 498
3. The Fear of the Lord Is the Beginning of Wisdom 500

LESSON XI

1. Solomon's Temple 506
2. I Was Glad When They Said Unto Me, Let Us Go Unto the House of the Lord 509
3. Ye Are a Temple of God 510

LESSON XII

1. The Meaning of Christmas 517
2. The Spirit of Christmas 519
3. Unto You Is Born This Day a Saviour 520

LIST OF MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

in Full-Page Reproduction

		Page
Statue of John the Evangelist	*Thorwaldsen*	Frontispiece
Relief Map of Palestine		xiv
Palestine in the Time of Christ		xv
The Baptism of Christ	*Du Mond*	14
Healing the Nobleman's Son	*Tissot*	72
Ye Seek Me for the Loaves	*Tissot*	102
The Betrayal	*Tidey*	202
The Angel at the Tomb	*Ender*	222
Palestine in the Time of David and Solomon		274
Goliath Addressing David	*Tissot*	324
David Hath Slain His Ten Thousands	*Tissot*	334
David and Saul	*Simeon Solomon*	354
Absalom	*Tissot*	444
David Seeing the Messengers Arrive	*Tissot*	454
Solomon Dedicating the Temple	*Tissot*	504

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

The Preparation of the Lesson. Sunday-school teaching calls for large hearts, lofty ideals, and well-trained minds. Webster defines an enthusiast as one whose mind is wholly possessed by what engages it. A successful Sunday-school teacher is an enthusiast. However calm his manner, his soul is aroused. An unaroused teacher is a failure. Shall he who has himself no interest in the lesson he is to teach, expect to arouse an interest in his pupils? Does not the effectiveness of the teaching depend largely on the spirit of the teacher, and does not the spirit of the teacher depend largely on his consciousness of being thoroughly prepared to teach? The parable of the wise and the foolish virgins has a special lesson for him; the reserve oil, which will surely be needed, must be his.

The Plan of Teaching. This book will not spare the teacher the trouble of studying the lesson; its aim is to make all his study time count. The lesson period is only a fractional part of an hour in duration, and it is only a fractional part of the information given here which each teacher can use. The various topics are simply arranged, so that each one may see at a glance what is adapted to his special class. There are some topics, such as the explanation of the Bible text, the geographical and historical background of the lesson, which every teacher needs to master, whether or not he imparts that knowledge to his pupils. There are other topics which he may skip without reading, because written for younger pupils or for older pupils, or for pupils less informed or more informed, than are his. Each teacher knows his own pupils and knows what is adapted to them. The boy, for example, who had never seen the ocean, and defined a harbor as "a shady place in the ocean," lacks both experience and imagination, and needs a more thorough drill on the land where the events of the Bible occurred and the people to whom the words of the Bible were spoken, than does the boy of the same age whose travels and extensive reading have given him a better foundation of knowledge on which the teacher can build. From the lower knowledge of his pupils the teacher must lead up to his own higher knowledge.

Begin your preparation of a lesson more than a week in advance. Make your own independent study of the Bible text, and plan for the work which you will assign to your pupils, before the previous Sunday. Early in the week of the lesson read *The Guide* with pencil in hand, checking the sections which you wish to use. Select the lesson topic which you will make the center of your teaching, and make out your plan for teaching. Under each heading note down suggestive words that will recall to your mind the illustration you will use, the explanation you will give, the questions you will ask, etc. Then go over your plan until you have it thoroughly in mind. By doing this you will avoid faults that are common, aimless teaching, over emphasis of trivial things and under emphasis of important things, irrelevance, "scrappiness," and that groping in your mind for "something to say next."

Words and Phrases Explained. Many are the tangents leading far afield

which one who makes a critical study of the Bible text is tempted to traverse. And easy is it for one who is giving "elucidative notes" to fall into the error of a learned preacher who used the word analysis in a talk to his Sunday-school and then stopped to add: "This word you may not understand, my dear children; it is equivalent to epitome." The explanations of words and phrases of the Bible text are brief in *The Guide;* much time and thought have been expended to make them brief. The aim has been to give all that is essential to the correct understanding of the text, and therefore to right teaching, and to exclude all else.

The text given is the Authorized Version, and every variation from it, whether in meaning or wording, is stated under "Words and Phrases Explained." The teaching is based upon the Revised Version, and the texts in "The Bible its Own Interpreter" and every biblical citation, as well, are those of the American Revised Version.

Suggestive Thoughts from Helpful Writers. These words of noted authors interpret the text and are full of stimulating thought. They are pure metal, smelted from a large amount of ore.

Light from Oriental Life. When Mr. Henry P. Haven, a successful Sunday-school worker, was conducting a teachers' meeting and discussing the lesson about the healing of blind Bartimæus he wished to draw out the fact that there were no asylums in Christ's day, that all great philanthropies have been the result of man's adoption of Christ's spirit and teachings, and therefore he asked one of the teachers why Bartimæus sat and begged instead of going to the Jericho Blind Asylum. "I suppose he had a feeling that he didn't want to be in an asylum," was the unexpected answer. A knowledge of the people of Palestine, their life and customs, and their way of thinking and speaking, is necessary to a correct understanding of the words first addressed to them. This information is given in connection with each lesson, either to throw light on the text, or to add vividness and reality to the scene.

The Geographical Background. "How we delight to build our recollections upon some basis of reality — a place, a country, a local habitation," says Washington Irving. "How the events of life, as we look back upon them, have grown into the well-remembered background of the places where they fell upon us." It is alike a delight and a necessity to build our pupils' knowledge of the Bible upon a geographical basis of reality. The haze of remoteness and unreality which in many pupils' minds hovers over the events narrated in the Bible, will be dispelled when they know the land where the events took place. As much geographical information is given in connection with the lessons as a teacher can impart to pupils who have themselves no text-book. The new relief map of Palestine will be found especially helpful in showing the physical features of the land, particularly the great depression of the Jordan Valley where Christ's public life was spent, and the "hill country" where the Israelites lived under their kings.

For the use of pupils themselves, a little book on the Geography of Palestine in the Time of Christ has been issued by the publishers of *The Guide.* This contains a full discussion of the physical and political geography of Palestine, all that is essential for the study of the Gospels, and yet no more than the pupils can readily learn. In addition to its two large maps and numerous diagrams, it has outline maps for the pupil to fill in accordance with directions given. It is believed that pupils will find this work interesting as well as

profitable. The paragraphs of the geography are numbered, and in connection with each lesson from the Book of John during the first two quarters the following paragraphs may be assigned to pupils: —

First Quarter: I, 1–6; II, 171, 7–13; III, 171, 14–19; IV, 119, 122, 125, 20–24; V, 119, 129, 25–34; VI, 147, 148, 149, 35–41; VII, 165, 42–53; VIII, 123, 124, 54–58; IX, 153, 59–65; X, 155, 157, 66–71; XI, 124, 72–79; XIII, 82–87.

Second Quarter: I, 119, 88–95; II, 131, 132, 96–105; III, 131, 132, 106, 107; IV, 119, 108–117; V, 118–124; VI, 119, 125–129; VII, 126, 130–141; VIII, 126, 142–145; IX, 126, 146–154; X, 129, 155–161; XI, 50, 162–169; XIII, 170–176.

The Historical Background. The Bible is not a treasury of separate verses nor of separate paragraphs, often one verse can not be rightly understood when removed from its setting, and seldom can one lesson be rightly taught without a study of its connection with what comes before and after, and of its relation to the history under consideration. We are not given ten to twenty independent, disconnected verses each week, nor are we given fifty-two independent, disconnected lessons during the year. Each lesson must be taught as a whole, and also as a part of the biography or the history to which it belongs. In addition to the historical background given with each lesson, the books taken up during the year are discussed in this Introduction, that the teacher may quickly gain a clear conception of each book, its purpose and contents.

The Approach to the Lesson. "My teacher always begins the lesson by asking, 'Well, children, what is the lesson about to-day?' or else by saying, 'Well, Mary, you may read the first verse of the lesson,'" remarked an observant pupil. There are more observant pupils in every class than all teachers are aware. You can never succeed in impressing the lesson truths unless you succeed in gaining your pupils' attention. You can not gain their attention at the start if you always begin the lesson in the same way.

Mr. Leslie W. Quick in giving counsel as to the way a short story should be written, says that "Unless you can interest an editor in your first two or three paragraphs, your story may be submitted to every periodical in the country without the slightest chance of acceptance." It is equally true that if you fail to gain the interested attention of your pupils by your first two or three sentences, the probability of your having it later on is greatly diminished. It is far easier to hold your pupils' thoughts from the beginning than it is to control them after they have settled down to think about something else, or worse still, to talk about something else. Because this part of a teacher's preparation should not be left to the spur of the moment, with each lesson two suggestions are here given for leading up to the lesson teaching or for introducing the lesson itself, one written for young pupils and the other for older ones.

Lesson Topics and Illustrations. Having secured your pupils' attention at the beginning, you will show your good teaching by keeping it throughout the lesson period. Experiments have proved that by an effort of the will strong-minded adults can give their attention to that in which they are not interested only for a brief space of time. Children do not exert any will power along this line; their attention must be held by giving them what they consider worthy of attention.

To take up the first verse of the lesson and say all that can be said about it and then drop it forever and take up and discuss the second verse in the same way, relinquishing it for the third verse, and so on through the lesson, is not

wise teaching. By this method a score of disconnected, unrelated thoughts is presented, there is no teaching of the meaning of the lesson as a whole, and there is no definite impression left upon the pupils' minds.

Usually there are many topics which the verses chosen suggest. Three of the most obvious ones are discussed with each lesson in *The Guide*. The teacher will decide which topic is best adapted to his own pupils' comprehension and profit, and will make that topic the center of his lesson teaching.

Under each topic a number of illustrations is given to enforce the lesson truth. "Let me never tag a moral to a story, not tell a story without a meaning" is a wise resolve of Dr. van Dyke's which has been kept in mind during the writing and selecting of the illustrations. The value of apt illustrations every Sunday-school teacher realizes. By their means instruction in right living is given inductively, and they have a charm and impelling force to "go and do likewise" that exhortation and abstract reasoning can never possess.

Sentence Sermons. How often does some one mention the influence a single sentence has had on the career of a life time! If you can lead your pupils to memorize some of the noble sentiments beautifully and strikingly expressed, culled from the best literature, and given with each lesson under the heading of "Sentence Sermons" they will unconsciously adopt them as guiding principles. Because things seen are mightier than things heard, as Emerson tells us, let one of your pupils write one or two of these sentences on your blackboard before the lesson period, or have the sentences hectographed and give them to your pupils to be copied in their note-books, together with the topic and the Bible verses which they enforce.

The Bible its Own Interpreter. The Bible verses here given are other golden texts that throw light on the lesson, and should be treated as are the sentence sermons. Ask your pupils to copy and bring to the class other Bible verses which illuminate the lesson.

Personal Thoughts. The result of Sunday-school teaching must be practical, it must not end in enlarged knowledge of Bible truths, but in noble conduct and Christian character. The knowledge is the trellis up which the vine climbs, it is a help in the elevation of the vine, but the life of the vine itself must be nourished to impel it to seek the upper bars. Unless the experiences of Saul and David and Solomon and the life of Jesus Christ Himself are so presented to the pupils as to inspire them to Christian living, the year's work will have been in vain. Ruskin's words on education are preëminently true of biblical instruction: You do not educate a man by telling him what he knew not, but by making him what he was not, and what he will remain forever.

The "Personal Thoughts" given with each lesson are based on the teaching of the lesson text, and are designed to make the pupils realize that the spiritual life is not a thing apart from the natural life, that religion is not something to be heard about on Sundays and forgotten on week days. A variety of resolutions worthy of being put into practice are given; only those within their needs and reach will the teacher seek to have the pupils make their own.

The Lesson briefly told. This includes the entire lesson, not merely the special verses printed. It is designed to furnish a convenient review of the lesson for all teachers, and especially to aid teachers of young pupils, in

whose classes the Bible story itself must be taught as well as the truth the lesson teaches. Older pupils should themselves be led to tell the lesson story. It is a good plan to ask a different pupil each week to write out the lesson story as briefly as possible in his own words and bring it to the class. Towards the end of the lesson period let him read what he has written, and let the others add what may have been omitted or correct any misstatement. Be careful to commend whatever you can. Do not criticize "poor but honest" work, and seek to obtain better work, not by fault-finding, but by appreciation of effort and by arousing of ambition.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion. In adult classes the lesson should be taught from broad and thoughtful view points. Among the lesson topics there is always one adapted to Bible classes, and other topics suitable only for such classes are suggested under this heading.

Work to be assigned. An important part of the teacher's work is the preparation of work for his pupils. Do not urge a pupil to "study the lesson," but give him a definite thing to do, something which he is capable of doing, which he will be interested in doing, and he will do it. With the questions suggested in this book to be assigned to pupils the answers are given for the convenience of the teacher, but the Bible references should not be given to pupils who are capable of finding the answers without them. Show your pupils how to use the Subject-Index and Concordance in their Bibles. In many classes one question will be enough for each pupil. Copy the questions that are suitable for your class on separate slips of paper and give them out at the close of each lesson period. Questions calling for the pupils' opinion or thought may be given to two or more pupils, that you may have several opinions to discuss in class. Make a note of the pupil to whom you give a question, and do not forget to call upon him the next week for his answer. With older classes announce each week the topic which you will make the central theme of the lesson. If you have never tried this, you will be pleasantly surprised at the new interest aroused and at your pupils' contributions to the class discussions.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

What we know about the Life of the Apostle John. John was the younger of two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Salome. His father was Zebedee a fisherman of Galilee in good circumstances, for he had "hired servants." His mother Salome was probably a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Salome was one of the women who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem "ministering unto Him." She was at the cross, and she was among the first at His tomb on the morning of the resurrection.

John became one of the disciples of John the Baptist, and was led by the Baptist to attach himself to Jesus. After going with Jesus to Cana and to Jerusalem and back to Galilee through Samaria, he returned to his fishing for a time, till called to join Jesus as a permanent disciple, and chosen a little later one of the twelve apostles. It is thought probable that he had a house in Jerusalem (19. 27), and was personally acquainted with the high priest (18. 15).

Jesus termed James and John *Boanerges,* "Sons of Thunder," because of their impetuous spirit and vehement temper, which at rare intervals blazed forth (Mark 9. 38; 10. 35–40; Luke 9. 49–55). Of the many disciples, the seventy evangelists, and the twelve apostles, these two brothers and Peter shared the greatest degree of their Master's confidence, and of these three John was the one who lived in the closest intimacy with Jesus, the one whom pre-eminently Jesus loved. John followed Jesus to His trial, and to the cross, and to him Jesus left the care of His mother. On the resurrection morning he went to the tomb with Peter, and there "he saw and believed." With the other disciples he conversed with Jesus after His resurrection. In his first Epistle he could say: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life, declare we unto you."

John remained a leader of the church throughout his long life. Paul refers to him and Peter and James as "reputed to be pillars." He was associated with Peter in the healing of the lame man at the door of the temple, and in the preaching of Christ in Jerusalem in spite of the threats of the Sanhedrin. Together they went on an apostolic mission to Samaria.

About 66 A. D. the war began which led to the destruction of Jerusalem, and John probably went with a great number of Christians to Pella, among the mountains of Gilead on the other side of the Jordan. Later he settled in Ephesus in Asia Minor, according to the authority of writers of the second century.

There is a pleasant story told by Jerome that in the Apostle's last years, when he was too feeble to preach, he was wont to have himself carried to the place of worship to repeat there the same words, "Little children love one another." And when asked why he always said this, he replied: "Because it is the Lord's command; and if only this be done, it is enough."

In Revelation 1. 9–11, there is a reference to his being banished by the Roman

emperor to the isle of Patmos in the Ægean Sea, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. His three epistles were written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

John was the last survivor of the Apostles. He had seen the followers of Christ grow from a handful of faithful believers, mainly Galileans, gathered in a single "upper-room," into a great number, organized as churches, and scattered throughout the Roman Empire. The old tradition is that when he was over ninety years old, certain elders of the church came to him at Ephesus, and asked him to add to the first three Gospels whatever he thought necessary to make them more complete. To fulfill their request, he wrote in the Greek language "The Gospel according to St. John." Eusebius (4th century) quotes from Clement of Alexandria "who had seen and conversed with Peter and Paul"; "John, last of all, perceiving that what had reference to the external history of the Gospel of our Saviour was sufficiently detailed, and being encouraged by friends and divinely influenced by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel." The majority of Christian scholars believe that the Fourth Gospel was written for the whole Christian world by the Apostle John at Ephesus about the year 85 A. D.

The Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel. The word *Gospel* is derived from the two Anglo-Saxon words, *god,* meaning good, and *spell,* meaning tidings. God-spell, gospel, good tidings. The four writers of the Gospels are called *Evangelists,* from a Greek word meaning *the bringer of good tidings.* The first three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are called the *Synoptists,* and their writings the *Synoptic Gospels.* The word *synopsis* is from two Greek words meaning *a view together, a collective view.* The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke may be viewed together, while the Gospel according to John must be viewed by itself. The first three have many striking similarities, and equally striking is their difference from the Fourth Gospel.

The Synoptists narrate chiefly Jesus' ministry in Galilee; John narrates chiefly His ministry in Judea: the Synoptists portray Jesus in action; John portrays Him in meditation: the Synoptists give more of the main facts of Jesus' life; John gives more explanations of the facts: the Synoptists reveal the living, historic Jesus; John reveals the innermost spirit of Jesus: the Synoptists make us see and hear Jesus; John makes us apprehend Him: the Synoptists gives His brief, epigramatic sayings; John gives His long discourses: the Synoptists record mainly the words of Jesus about the common interests of every-day life; John records His words upon profoundly deep themes; the Synoptists give His parables; John gives His conversations: the Synoptists report His talks with the peasants of Galilee; John reports His words with the religious thinkers of Jerusalem: the Synoptists tell us about the Kingdom of God: John tells us about the King: the Synoptic Gospels are biographies of Jesus told so as to claim our hearts; John's Gospel is a biography of Jesus told so as to claim our minds.

Dean Farrar aptly compares the Synoptists to Xenophon, who gives the outer life of Socrates, and John to Plato, who gives Socrates' inmost spirit. Rev. Frederick Palmer compares John's Gospel to the work of a portrait painter. The greatness of a Rembrandt or Watts portrait, he reminds us, does not lie in the fact that it tells us of what color the subject's eyes were or what kind of coat he wore, but in showing us a human soul gazing from the canvas. It

is such a likeness of Jesus that the Fourth Gospel gives. "St. Mark, with his eye for detail, records this and that circumstance which we welcome as furnishing the fact-basis for our conception of our Lord. Then comes St. John; and upon this background he paints so wonderfully that we behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God beaming forth in the face of Jesus Christ."

Very striking are the omissions in John's Gospel. "There are also many other things which Jesus did," the writer himself says in his last verse. The Fourth Gospel omits the whole record of the first thirty years of Jesus' life, telling nothing about His birth, infancy and boyhood. It shows us Jesus meeting John the Baptist at the Jordan, but it tells us nothing about the early life and ministry of the Forerunner, and nothing about His death, and it omits any mention of the baptism and temptation of Jesus. It gives no account of the Transfiguration of Jesus, His institution of the Lord's Supper, His agony in Gethsemane, His ascension. There are no children in this Gospel, no lepers, no demons, no Sermon on the Mount, and no parables. There is scarcely a word about the whole of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, and only seven of His miracles are recorded.

The main incidents that are common both to John and the Synoptists are the incidents of Passion Week. He records five miracles not found in the other Gospels, and the conversations with Nicodemus, with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, and with the disciples before the last passover. From his Gospel we learn most about the Holy Spirit and about Jesus' words before His death and after His resurrection.

The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel. It was not John's purpose to give a complete life of Jesus. While he repeated some things given by the Synoptists, he seems to have chosen only those facts which best suited the purpose he had in mind in writing his Gospel. The Fourth Gospel completes and rounds out the other three, "fulfilling" them in the sense Canon Farrar explains of "filling them with a diviner plentitude of meaning," but the chief purpose of the writer is stated in the Gospel itself (20. 30. 31). "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." To quote the words of Augustine, "St. John has lifted higher and far more sublimely than the other three his proclamation, and in lifting it up he has wished our hearts also to be lifted." He would both awaken faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and also (and this seems to have been his greater ambition) so strengthen the faith of believers in Christ that they may have life in His name, spiritual life, a life of constant communion with God.

Some one has found that the word *believe* or its equivalent occurs nearly one hundred times in this brief Gospel, and the kindred words translated *therefore* and *in order that* occur three hundred and thirty-four times, showing that belief is the object of the writing, and that this object is persistently pursued in a logical, argumentative manner.

The belief of John, which the poet Browning in *A Death in the Desert* thus voices —

> "To me, that story — ay, that Life and Death
> Of which I wrote, 'it was' — to me, it is;
> — Is, here and now: I apprehend naught else."

he would have all men make their own, and to attain that, he rigidly excludes whatever does not subserve this purpose; he gives typical incidents which reveal Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, so that the confirmation of men's faith shall deepen and enrich their lives. This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

The Plan of the Gospel. John begins with a proposition and then proceeds to demonstrate it. He asserts that the eternal Word of God had been manifested in Jesus of Nazareth — the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John proves Jesus' divine Sonship by the testimony of those who knew Him, by the signs He wrought, and by His self-disclosures. The deeds and words and claims of Jesus produce two opposing results, and John shows the rise and development of each; the increasing faith and devotion of His disciples and Apostles which lead them to take up His work when He leaves them, and the increasing disbelief and hatred of the official Jews which bring Him to the cross.

The outline of the Gospel may thus be stated:

I. Prologue 1. 1–18.
II. Self-revelation of Jesus, 1. 19–20. 31.
  1. To the world. 1. 19–12. 50.
    a. Growing faith in Jesus. 1. 19–4. 54.
    b. Growing opposition to His claims. 5. 1–12. 50.
  2. To the disciples. 13. 1–17. 26.
  3. Through His Passion and Resurrection. 18. 1–20. 31.
III. Appendix. 21.

The Proof in the Gospel. The witness to Jesus in John's Gospel is borne by the Father and the Spirit, by Old Testament Scriptures, by John the Baptist, by men, both those who believed and those who disbelieved His divine authority, and mainly by Jesus Himself. The culminating point of all human witnessing is reached after the resurrection when Thomas, the most skeptical of His followers, cries out, "My Lord and my God." Here we might almost add the geometrical formula *Q. E. D.* (*Quod erat demonstrandum,* which was to be demonstrated). The last chapter of the book is clearly an appendix, written to correct an erroneous belief that had gained currency in regard to John himself.

"Ye have sent unto John (the Baptist) and he hath borne witness unto the truth;" says Jesus, "but the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." Of the works which Jesus did, the ability to do which He claims as evidence that God was working through Him, John records seven: the changing of water into wine at Cana; the healing of the nobleman's son at a distance; the restoring to strength the man helpless for thirty-eight years; the feeding of the five thousand; the walking on the sea; the giving of sight to the man born blind; and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This selection John makes for the purpose of setting forth spiritual truths in connection with each; he seems to relate these "signs" primarily for the sake of the conversations to which they give rise.

The witness of Jesus to Himself as the Revealer of the Father, as the One sent by Him, are many in this Gospel. The emphatic form of *I* in the Greek occurs some twenty-six times in connection with Jesus' claims. Some of the most

familar are these: Before Abraham was I am; I am the bread of life; I am the Living Bread; I am the Door; I am the Good Shepherd; I am the Light of the World; I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; I am the Resurrection and the Life; I am the True Vine.

"To speak of all the passages of this wonderful Gospel that minister to the strengthening of the Christian faith and the deepening of the life of God in the soul, would be to bring the whole book before you, chapter by chapter, and verse by verse."

The Style of the Gospel. "In the whole range of literature," says Dr. Marcus Dods, "there is no composition which is a more perfect work of art, or which more rigidly excludes whatever does not subserve its main end. From the first word to the last there is no paragraph, sentence, or expression which is out of its place, or with which we could dispense. Part hangs together with part in perfect balance. The sequence may at times be obscure, but sequence there always is. The relevancy of this or that remark may not at first sight be apparent, but irrelevancy is impossible to this writer."

The Fourth Gospel is shot through with the writer's own personality. John was the most gifted and the most favored of the Apostles. He was a man of vision. He alone understood the intent and saw the heart of Jesus. Wonderful in his Gospel is the union of simplicity of language and depth of thought, and marvelously does he write of

"Truth fulfilled and truth to be—
Never purer mystery
Did a purer tongue unfold."

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS, AND CHRONICLES

Why the Books are divided. Written Greek requires much more space than written Hebrew, almost twice as much, a Hebrew scholar estimates. No doubt this was the reason that in the earliest and most important Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament writings, the Septuagint, each of the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles is divided into two books, for the scrolls used were of limited length. This division has been retained in the English versions.

The Way in which the Books were written. Much was written about the events of the Civil War at the time they occurred, and men who knew Lincoln wrote their estimate of him as a man and recorded his sayings and deeds. Since then, biographers who have no personal knowledge of the War, and who never saw Lincoln, have written Lives of Lincoln, each from his own point of view. They went to "the original sources," as we call the records made at the time of the events, and from them selected the facts and incidents they wished to use for the purpose they had in mind, and these they rewrote in their own words, and to them added their own thoughts in the way of explanations, inferences, deductions, and so forth. If they had incorporated in their biographies the exact words of the original records, without quotation marks and without credit, and had welded them together with words of their own, they would have done what the Hebrew historians seem to have done who prepared the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. At the time these historical books were written, it was not deemed important to perpetuate the names of the

historians; and to insert bodily in their writings long portions of earlier records without stating the source was the habit of the writers.

In each of the three books mention is made of an official recorder, or chronicler. Second Chronicles 20. 34 tells us that "the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat," the court recorder several times mentioned in Samuel and Kings, "behold, they are written in the history of Jehu, which is inserted in the book of the kings of Israel." In Kings reference is made to the existence of "the Book of the Acts of Solomon" (1 Kings 11. 41), "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (referred to seventeen times), and "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" (referred to fifteen times). These and other books are mentioned as sources of information in Chronicles. It is natural to suppose that these were collections of the court records made by the official recorders, "the original sources" from which portions were taken and inserted by the historians in their books.

In the Books of Samuel there is no reference, as in Kings and Chronicles, to other records. Opinions differ as to whether or not they are a compilation from different sources. We have three lessons this year which strongly insist that Samuel told the people of Israel they sinned against God in asking for a king, and there is another record in the book which says that Jehovah told Samuel whom he should choose for king, and said, "He shall save My people out of the hands of the Philistines, for I have looked upon My people, because their cry is come unto Me." We have a lesson about God's rejection of Saul because of his disobedience in regard to the Amalekites, and there is another account in the book of his rejection because he offered sacrifices at Gilgal instead of waiting for Samuel. We have a lesson about David's encounter with Goliath which represents him as being sent by his father Jesse to the Israelite camp with food for his brothers, while in the preceding chapter David is already Saul's armor bearer. If we consider the Books of Samuel as a connected history written by one writer, then some trouble must be taken to harmonize the apparently conflicting statements. But if we consider the Books as a compilation in which the editor has given side by side accounts of the same event written from different view points, then the necessity for explaining difficulties vanishes. The value of the lessons is the same in either case. That God is the supreme Ruler, and a nation's prosperity depends on its allegiance to Him, is the underlying thought of the lessons about the establishment of the Monarchy, for instance, and is wholly independent of Samuel's attitude towards the change of government.

The Books of Samuel. While the greater part of the Books of Samuel is devoted to Saul and David, the explanation of the title may be found in the fact that the history of Samuel occupies the principal part of the early chapters, and he is a prominent character later, having anointed both Saul and David, his successors as leaders of the people. The Books begin during the judgeship of Eli, and narrate the history of the Israelites (more strictly speaking, the history of God's dealings with the Israelites as a people) under the leadership of Samuel, Saul, and David, ending with the close of David's life, a period of about one hundred years. At the beginning Israel is the collection of scattered tribes described in the Book of Judges; at the close Israel is an important nation. Those who believe the Books to be a compilation assign 700 B. C. as about the date in which they were edited by an historian.

Outline of the Books of Samuel.

I. The Early Life and Judgeship of Samuel. 1 Sam. 1. 7.
  1. Birth, Childhood, and Vision of Samuel. 1. 1–3. 21.
  2. Defeat of Israel by the Philistines and Death of Eli. 4. 1–22.
  3. Samuel's Address. 12.
  4. The Victory over the Philistines. 7. 3–17.

II. The Reign of Saul. 1 Sam. 8–31.
  1. Circumstances leading to the Choice of Saul as King. 8–10.
  2. Saul's Conquest of the Ammonites. 11.
  3. Samuel's Address. 12.
  4. Saul's and Jonathan's Wars with the Philistines and Saul's Rejection. 13–15.
  5. David Anointed. 16. 1–13.
  6. David at Court and his Victory over Goliath. 16. 14–17. 58.
  7. Saul's Jealousy and Pursuit of David. 18. 1–27. 4.
  8. David at Ziklag, Battle of Mount Gilboa, and Death of Saul. 27. 5–31. 13.

III. The Reign of David. 2 Sam. 1–24.
  1. David Mourning for Saul. 1.
  2. David made King. 2–5.
  3. The Ark brought to Jerusalem. 6.
  4. David's Wish to build the Temple, and His Refusal. 7.
  5. His Victories. 8–10.
  6. His Sin. 11, 12.
  7. Absalom's Vengeance and Rebellion. 13–18.
  8. David's Return to Jerusalem and Revolt of Sheba. 19, 20.

IV. An Appendix. 21–24.
  1. The Famine and Atonement. War with the Philistines. 21.
  2. David's Psalm of Thanksgiving. 22.
  3. List of David's Mighty Men. 23.
  4. Numbering of the People. 24.

The Books of Kings. The close connection of Samuel and Kings is shown by the names given in the Septuagint: the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Books of the Kingdoms. The Books of Kings begin with David's feeble old age, narrate the history of the United Kingdom under Solomon, and continue with the history of the two kingdoms which arose at his death till the Northern Kingdom was conquered by Assyria and the Southern by Babylon. The period covered is more than four centuries. The last event recorded is the release of Jehoiachim from prison, B. C. 561.

Outline of the Books of Kings.

I. Accession of Solomon and Death of David. 1. 1–2. 12.

II. Reign of Solomon. 2. 13–11. 43.
  1. The fate of His Rivals. 2. 12–46.
  2. His Marriage. Choice of Wisdom. 3.
  3. His Power and Wealth and Alliance with Hiram. 4, 5.
  4. Building and Dedication of the Temple. 5. 1–9. 9.
  5. His Greatness and Wisdom. 9. 10–10. 29.
  6. His Fall. 11. 1–13.
  7. Review of His Reign. 11. 13–43.

III. History of the Two Kingdoms till the Captivity of Israel. 1 Kings 12–2. Kings 17.
IV. History of the Kingdom of Judah to the Exile. 2 Kings 18–25.

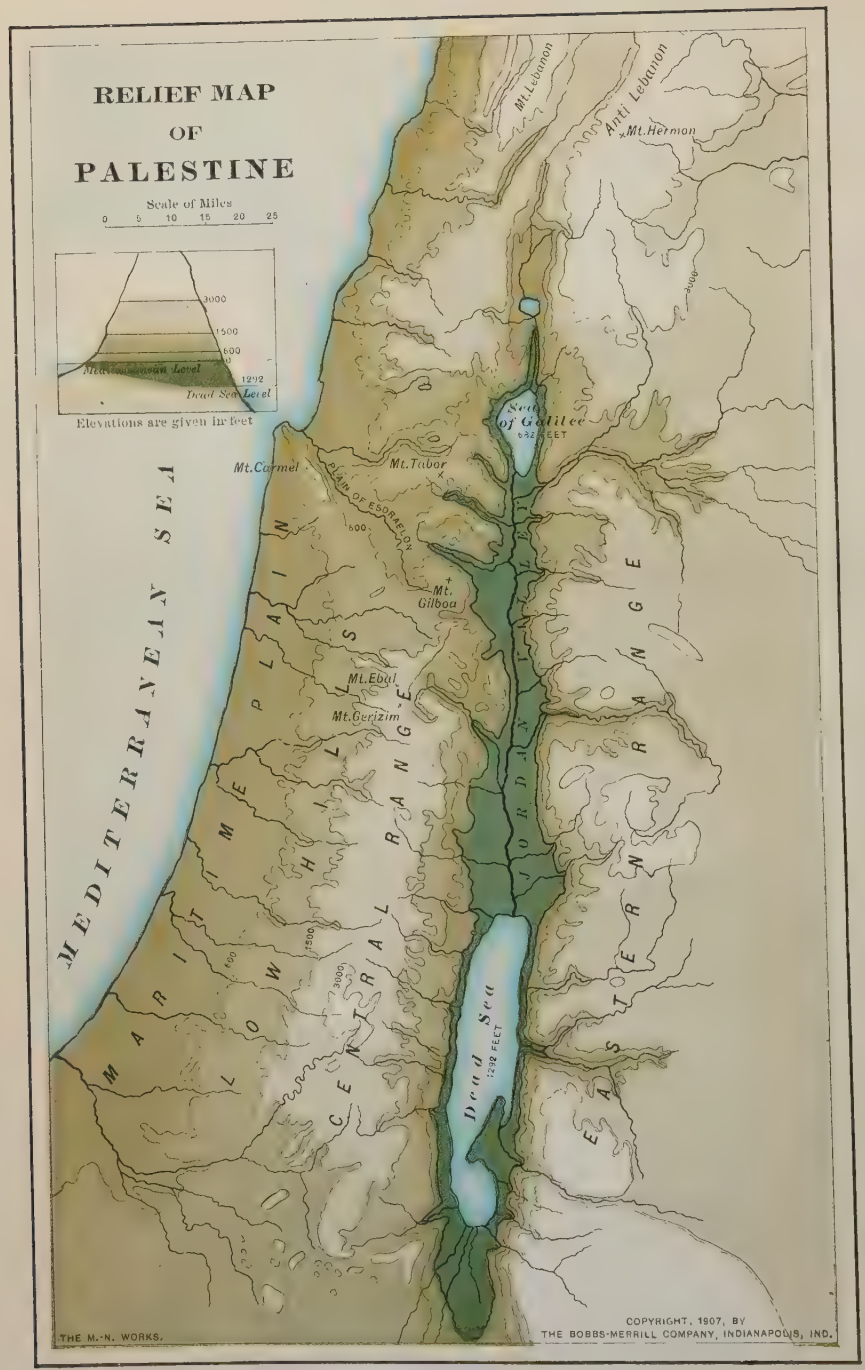
The Books of Chronicles. In the Septuagint these Books are called the First and Second Books of the "Omissions," as the Greek term literally means. They contain information omitted in Samuel and Kings in regard to the worship of the Israelites, as well as a repetition, somewhat enlarged, of portions of these books. They furnish a history of the worship of the Israelites from the death of Saul to the decree of Cyrus permitting the rebuilding of the temple, where the Book of Ezra takes up the history. They give a full account of everything bearing upon the true worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem.

The record of David's life is largely taken up with an account of his plans and preparations for the temple. It is the ideal David, whose supreme purpose was the worship of the Lord, who is here portrayed, while in Samuel we have a graphic account of the real David with all his failings writ large. Three hundred to two hundred and fifty B. C. is the date commonly assigned to the writing of Chronicles, and during the six or seven centuries that had elapsed since David's life he and his reign naturally become idealized, till the name of the sweet singer of Israel was associated only with the deepest religious experiences. The account of Solomon's building and dedication of the temple given in Kings is repeated and expanded in Chronicles.

The chronicler was not interested in the Northern Kingdom. In 2 Chronicles 25.7 it says: "There came a man of God to him (Amaziah) saying, O King, let not the army of Israel go with thee, for Jehovah is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim," and this seemingly is the thought throughout the record. Whatever mention of the Northern Kingdom is made, is given only because of its connection with the Kingdom of Judah.

Outline of the Books of Chronicles.

I. Genealogies, particularly of the Tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, from Adam to the Death of Saul. 1 Chron. 1–9.
II. History of the Kingdom of Judah from the Accession of David to the Decree of Cyrus permitting the Rebuilding of the Temple. 1 Chron. 10–2 Chron. 36.
  1. David's Reign. 1 Chron. 10–29.
  2. Solomon's Reign. 2 Chron. 1–9.
  3. History of the Kingdom of Judah. 2 Chron. 10–36.


RELIEF MAP
OF
PALESTINE
Scale of Miles
0 5 10 15 20 25
3000
1500
600
0
Mediterranean Level
1292
Dead Sea Level
Elevations are given in feet
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Mt. Lebanon
Anti Lebanon
Mt. Hermon
Sea of Galilee
682 FEET
Mt. Carmel
Mt. Tabor
Plain of Esdraelon
600
Mt. Gilboa
Mt. Ebal
Mt. Gerizim
MARITIME PLAIN
LOWER HILLS
CENTRAL RANGE
JORDAN VALLEY
EASTERN RANGE
Dead Sea
1292 FEET
THE M.-N. WORKS.
COPYRIGHT, 1907, BY
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

COPYRIGHT, 1907, BY
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

THE M.-N. WORKS.

LESSONS FOR 1908

THE WITNESS OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL TO JESUS
FIRST AND SECOND QUARTERS

THE UNITED KINGDOM—THIRD AND FOURTH QUARTERS

FIRST QUARTER

LESSON I—JANUARY 5

THE WORD MADE FLESH

John 1. 1–14. (Read John 1. 1–18.) Commit v. 3.

Golden Text

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. John 1. 14.

LESSON TEXT John 1. 1–14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 The same was in the beginning with God.
3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.
8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
9 *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.
12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *In the beginning was the Word.* In the beginning God, Gen. 1. 1. "The reference to the opening words of the Old Testament is the more striking when we remember that a Jew would constantly speak of and quote the book of Genesis as 'In the beginning' (Berēshith)." *Ellicott.* In the beginning, before the creation of the world, the Eternal Word was. Ὁ λόγος, Logos, The Word, is the term used by John to designate Christ before His incarnation.

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
1835 East Anaheim Street

In the beginning was the Word, the Word existed from all eternity; *the Word was with God,* the Word was distinct from God but intimately related to God; *the Word was God,* the word was equal with God. See Rev. 1. 8.

2. *The same, i. e.* the Word. This verse is a combination of the first two clauses of the first verse, repeated here to emphasize the fact that He who afterwards dwelt among men was in the very beginning with God.

3. *All things were made by him.* In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Gen. 1. 1. The Son is the executor of the Father's will; the universe is brought into being by God through the Son. In the Revised Version, instead of the preposition *by* we have the preposition *through,* denoting the agency by whom the work was accomplished. Compare Psalm 33. 6; 1 Cor. 8. 6; Col. 1. 16, 17; 1 John 1. 1–3. *That was made.* R. V., *that hath been made.* The assertion of a fact by means of both positive and negative statements is characteristic of John's writings.

4. *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.* He is the source of life, whence the life of men is derived; and His life is the source of light, whence comes men's power to discern the truth. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light. Psa. 36. 9.

5. *In darkness.* R. V., *in the darkness.* "As the light is truth, so the darkness is falsehood." *Lange. Comprehended.* R. V., *apprehended.* Did not lay hold of, appreciate it. R. V. M. (Margin of Revised Version), *overcame it not.* Did not eclipse the light.

6. *There was a man sent from God.* R. V., *There came a man, sent from God.* The Greek verb ἐγένετο, *came,* means *came into existence.* The Greek verb ἀπεσταλμένος, *sent,* means *sent on some mission;* from the same root our word *apostle* is derived. *Whose name was John.* The writer of the Gospel of John feels no need of adding "The Baptist," for he never mentions himself by name.

7. *To bear witness of the Light.* R. V., *That he might bear witness of the light. That all men through him might believe.* R. V., *that all might believe through him. Through him,* through the witness of John the Baptist.

8. *That light.* R. V., *the light. But was sent to bear witness.* R. V., *but came that he might bear witness.* "At the close of the first century it was still necessary for John to insist on this. At Ephesus, where this Gospel was written, Paul in his third missionary journey had found disciples still resting in 'John's baptism.' Acts. 19. 1–6." *Plummer.*

9. *The true light.* Christ was the true light in contrast with lesser reflecting lights, like John the Baptist. *Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* R. V., *even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. The light coming into the world* is Christ being manifested to men.

10. *By him.* R. V., *through him.*

11. *His own.* In the first clause τὰ ἴδια, *his own,* is neuter and signifies his own things, his own house, the land of Israel; in the second clause οἱ ἴδιοι, *his own,* is masculine, and signifies His own people, the Jews. *His own received him not.* R. V., *they that were his own received him not.*

12. *As many as received him.* His own people as a whole rejected Him, but there were individuals, Jews and others, who received Him. *To them gave he power to become the sons of God.* R. V., *to them gave he the right to become children of God. Even to them that believe on his name.* "Mark the distinction between believing Christ, that He is, and believing in Christ,

in His name, His revealed Being, in His Person; the former is purely intellectual and historical, the latter is moral and implies trust and appropriation of Christ as our Saviour." *Schaff.*

13. *Which.* R. V., *who.* In this verse there is a threefold denial of any human agency in the spiritual birth of the children of God, and one affirmation of the divine agency. See John 3. 6.

14. *The Word was made flesh.* R. V., *the Word became flesh.* "God's word, His self-expression, took unto itself a perfect and real humanity." *Nash. Dwelt.* The Greek verb means *tabernacled.* As in Old Testament times the tabernacle was the dwelling place of Jehovah, so in New Testament times the Person of Christ was His tabernacle. *Among us.* Those who lived during Christ's life, the eye-witnesses of His ministry. *We beheld his glory.* "The glory was not like the cloud or dazzling light in which God had manifested His glory in the ancient tabernacle. It was now a true ethical glory, a glory of personality and character, manifesting itself in human conditions." *Dods. Of the Father.* R. V., *from the Father. Full of grace and truth.* "Full of saving power and convincing reality." *Nash.* See John 2. 11; 11. 4. The first verse declares Christ's supreme divinity; the fourteenth verse, His perfect humanity.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1. *In the beginning was the Word.* There is a nautical term which beautifully describes the position of this verse of the great Evangel in its relation to our poor, plodding confusions, our utter failures to get a real start — "cleared." When a vessel is all through with unloading and loading cargoes, with troublesome landsmen and agents, with docks and tugs and officialdom's red tapes, has cast off her last cable and turned her prow to the great free seas, she is spoken of as "cleared." John wrote his Gospel in the midst of as wild a shrieking of human voices, as mad a confusion of human thoughts as ever was. If ever worldly businesses and rocky despairs and narrow channels and official humanities surrounded anything, they surrounded this Gospel, but at the very first verse it cleared for the eternities. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God." It cleared "in spite of rock and tempest's roar, in spite of false lights on the shore." The centuries have not called it back, nor the seas washed it down. There is not, nor ever will be, anything better for us to follow than its white wake out to sea. *James Lee Mitchell.*

1. *The Word was God.* As in a coronation ceremony one rides before the king, making proclamation of his rights and claims, and challenging dispute, so John opens his Gospel with this sublime proclamation: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. What, then, is the idea which is in John's mind? Jesus is the very Word of God, how are we to understand this saying? Well, what is a word? A word is the true expression of him who utters it. We have various ways of communication with one another, but the chief of all these ways is by speech. Within this intricate apparatus, which we call the body, sits a tenant who is wholly distinct from the body. This tenant thinks, wills, feels — lives a life separate from the senses — a life sacred and invisible. How shall this tenant communicate with the outer world? By speech: alphabets and words come to his help: the lip is taught their use, and then the sacred ten-

ant within the body can utter itself to the world. So John conceives God as cut off from man by many barriers: "No man hath seen God at any time, nor can see Him." How shall God communicate with the creature that He hath made? He does so by Christ who is His word. Christ is the very mind of God translating itself into symbols which man can comprehend. As your word is yourself uttered, so Christ is God uttered.

Christ is not a word, you observe, but the Word. Every prophet was a word of God. Every great or good man since the world began, who has added anything to the general fund of virtue or of truth, has been a word of God. Galileo was God's word to science: Luther was God's word to religion. Every noble book added to the world's literature is a word of God. One may go further, and in thinking of the various religions of the world, say that Zoroaster also was a word of God: Buddha was His word. But Christ was The Word — the full and complete thought of God — uttered once and for all, expressing the very soul of God with such entire precision and finality, that of Him it may be said: The Word was with God and the Word was God. *W. J. Dawson, The Reproach of Christ.*

4. *The Life was the light of men.* Not, The Word was the light of men; but, the life in men — derived from the Word, who is the eternal spring of life — was the light of men. The life which the lower creature has is its light; it lives by the instincts which its life affords. So should men have an inner light for their life, be guided by the intuitions of it. And why are they not? Are there such intuitions? And true ones giving direction? And can men trust these? Do they obey them? Do they recognize them? The following verse seems to answer this, which gives the reason why men have not been guided, have not followed the suggestions of the light within them. That light had to contend with darkness. *Darkness opposed to light;* one of John's favorite words, meaning all that light is not; whatever is contrary to the life of God in the soul of man. *George Reith.*

9. *That was the true Light.*

A tender child of summers three,
Seeking her little bed at night,
Paused on the dark stair timidly.
"O mother! take my hand," said she,
"And then the dark will all be light."

We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before;
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day
And there is darkness nevermore.

Reach downward to the sunless days,
Wherein our guides are blind as we,
And faith is small and hope delays;
Take Thou the hands of prayer we raise,
And let us feel the light of Thee! *Whittier.*

14. *The Word dwelt among us.*

I am what I was: that is God. Verse 1.
I was not what I am: that is man. Verse 14.
I am now both God and man. Verse 18. *Gomorus.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *The Word.* John at once introduces us to a Being whom he speaks of as "the Word." He uses the term without apology, as if already it were familiar to his readers, and yet he adds a brief description of it, as if possibly they might attach to it ideas incompatible with his own. He uses it without apology, because in point of fact it already had circulation both among Greek and Jewish thinkers. In the time of Christ "the Word of the Lord" had become the current designation by which Jewish teachers denoted the manifested Jehovah. *Marcus Dods.*

8. *He was not that light.* Just as oriental people call the early dawn "the false dawn" because many mistake it for daylight, so John the Baptist might be called the false light, because many mistook him for the promised Messiah.

9. *That was the true Light.* From early Christian times, great quantities of lamps, running into hundreds, have been found in the recent excavations of ancient Gezer, and some of them are inscribed with such inscriptions as "The Lord is my Light." It would seem that from the early belief that the spirit required food and drink — and weapons, too, for they have been found in great numbers — gradually developed the thought that light was more needed in the dark underworld, and this in early Christian ages led to the lamp, symbolizing, in the darkness of the tomb, Him who is the "Light of the World." It is interesting, too, to notice how these customs survive in the Orient to-day, where lamps and candles are kept burning around the corpse among both Christians and Jews, and are burnt for many days after the burial in the death chambers. *E. W. G. Masterman,* in *Biblical World.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Let us get a clear idea of the situation and the size of the country which was the home of Jesus Christ throughout His earthly life. At the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea lies Syria. The southern part of Syria is Palestine. Palestine is limited on the north by the mountains of Lebanon, on the east and south by the desert, and on the west by the Mediterranean, or Great Sea as it was formerly called.

Western Palestine compared with New Jersey

The word Palestine is used both for Western Palestine, the part west of the Jordan River, and for Palestine proper, which includes also a section east of the Jordan. Western Palestine may be compared with New Jersey in area, as the diagram shows. New Jersey has 7,455 square miles, and Palestine 6,400 square miles. The area of Palestine proper is somewhat indefinite, but it is generally given as nearly 12,000 square miles, or about the size of the state of Maryland.

"From Dan to Beersheba," usually considered the length of the country, is one hundred and forty miles. The greatest length of Western Palestine is one hundred and sixty miles, and its average width is forty miles. It is, as you see, a very small country, for its length could be crossed by rail in less than six hours, and its breadth in less than two hours. From its

highest mountain peaks a glimpse can be had of almost the entire country. After Jesus was brought back in infancy from Egypt, His entire life was spent within this small territory. We have no record of any journey farther north than Cæsarea Philippi, south than Bethlehem, east than Bethany beyond the Jordan, and west than the region of Tyre and Sidon.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Matthew begins his Gospel by giving the genealogy of Christ, tracing it back to Abraham; Mark begins with His baptism, the commencement of His public life; Luke traces His genealogy to Adam, and begins with an account of His birth, infancy, and childhood; John passes by Abraham, Adam, and the creation, and beginning with the eternal past, shows us the divinity and glory of Christ which He had with the infinite Father before ever the world was.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Six months from now we shall continue our study of the Israelites, and shall learn how they fared under Samuel and the kings who followed him, but meanwhile we are to study about our great King, Jesus Christ, as the Gospel of St. John shows Him to us. In the very first words of his book, John takes us back in thought to the time when only God existed. What does the first verse of John's Gospel say? What are the words of the first verse of the Bible? Which words refer to the earlier time, "In the beginning" when "God created the heaven and the earth," or "In the beginning was the Word," — or Christ, for by "the Word," John means Christ — and Christ "was with God, and Christ was God?" Before God, the Creative Power, had created this world of ours, He alone existed, and yet Christ existed, too, for John tells us that He was with God and was God. The world was created by God the Father through God the Son, John tells us in the third verse of our lesson.

For Older Pupils. Professor Sanday aptly compares the Fourth Gospel to one of the great Egyptian temples still to be seen at Karnak or Edfu, whose sanctuary proper is approached through a pylon, a massive structure overtopping it in height and outflanking it on both sides. The pylon of St. John's Gospel is the Prologue, or first eighteen verses.

About three thoughts the words of the Prologue cluster: the nature of the Word; the Word rejected; and the Word received. These three thoughts form the Gospel of John itself, for it is a history of the revelation of Christ, of the unbelief of the Jewish people as a whole, and of the faith of the disciples.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Incarnate Word

Our Appreciation of a Mystery. The brute recognizes no mystery because its knowledge is sufficient. A single illustration will make this clear. I will suppose that none of you has ever heard the word "asymptote." When you hear the word for the first time it suggests no mystery, because it suggests no meaning. I explain the word to you. I tell you that an asymptote is a line

which is continually approaching a curved line, but that however long the lines might be drawn they would never meet. With this explanation you begin to see something of the mystery that the word involves. But still the mystery does not press upon you, for my words in regard to it sound foolish, and you attach little meaning to them. But if you study mathematics for yourself, if you study the mathematical formula for this line, if you see it proved by absolute demonstration that the one line is always approaching the other but can never reach it, then you will feel the full power of the mystery, because you have at last reached some full and definite knowledge. *Charles Carroll Everett, Immortality.*

The Mystery of the Incarnation. The beginning of the earthly life of Christ was the fulfillment, the filling full of a human nature by Divinity. It made the man in whom the miracle occurred, absolutely perfect man. It did not make Him something else than man. If it had done that, all His value as a pattern for humanity, all His temptation of men to be like Him, would be gone. Whenever He says to men, "Follow Me"; "Be like Me," He is declaring that He is man as they are men, that the peculiar Divinity which filled Him, while it carried humanity to its complete development, had not changed that humanity into something which was no longer human.

Can we picture that to ourselves? Is it not just as when the sunlight fills a jewel? The jewel throbs and glows with radiance. All its mysterious nature palpitates and burns with clearness. It opens depths of color which we did not see before. But still it is the jewel's self that we are seeing. The sunlight has made us see what it is, not turned it into something different from what it was. Or to take another illustration which perhaps comes nearer to our truth. A man becomes a scholar. He learns all rich and elevating truth. As that truth enters into him, his human nature opens and deepens and unfolds its qualities. He becomes "more of a man," as we say in one of our common phrases. But that very phrase, "more of a man," implies that he becomes not something different from man, but more truly and completely man. His manhood is not changed into something else; it is developed into a completer self by the truth which he learns.

In both these cases one thing evidently appears; which is, that the developing power which brings the being into which it enters to its best has essential and natural relations to the being which it develops. The jewel belongs to the light, the man belongs to the knowledge. And this must always be the truth which must underlie all understanding of the Incarnation. Man belongs to God. The human nature belongs to the Divine. It can come to its best only by the entrance and possession of it by Divinity. It is the first truth of all our existence that man is eternally the son of God. No man who forgets or denies that truth can really lay hold of the lofty fact that God entered into man. *Phillips Brooks.*

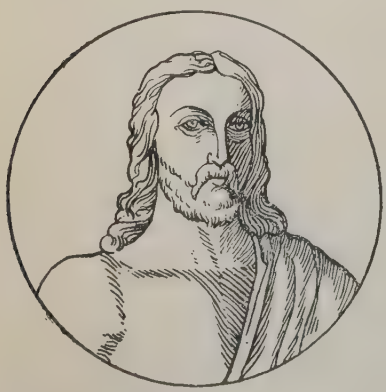
A Helpful Analogy. When Mr. Webster was asked if he comprehended Christ's divinity and humanity, he replied: "No, sir, I can not; and I should be ashamed to acknowledge Him as my Saviour if I could. If I could comprehend Him, He could be no greater than myself, and I need a superhuman Saviour." While no one can ever comprehend how Christ could be both God and Man, yet there are faint analogies in human lives which suggest helpful thoughts. One of the best is given by a recent writer from the life of Lewis Carroll, a man more famous for a delightful book written for children, *Alice in Wonderland,* than for his learned treatise on the *Differential Calculus.* Those who knew Professor Carroll as a distinguished mathematician, a lecturer on its higher

branches at Oxford, could not at first believe that he was the author of that most imaginative of all imaginative stories for children. How could one man be so thoroughly at home in two such opposite worlds of thought? It is impossible, they said. And yet it was true, and if a human being who was at home in the abstruse world of knowledge could so incarnate himself, as it were, in child life, must we not readily believe that God, to whom all things are possible, could incarnate Himself, and become in one Person perfect Deity and yet perfect Humanity?

Another Analogy. Perhaps the best symbol by which this mystery is shadowed forth may be seen in the union of soul and body in the constitution of man. The soul and body are very different in their properties and attributes. They are kept distinct in the human constitution, and yet the union forms one person. Man is a sum of apparent contradictions. He is mortal and immortal, a piece of clay, and an imperishable spirit. These paradoxes spring out of his complex nature. We predicate mortality and immortality of the same person because that person is constituted of a mortal body and immortal soul.

The union of the soul and body in man is inexplicable to us, just as the union of the human and divine natures is in Christ. Both are mysteries, and if one is rejected on the ground of its mystery, we are bound to reject the other on the same ground. *Thomas C. Easton, The Incarnation.*

If any Man willeth to do His Will, he shall know of the Teaching, whether it is of God. Only those who accept Christ as their Saviour can be fully convinced of His glorious divinity. It is by the experimental method, not by the philosophical method, that our finite minds grasp the infinite truth that God revealed Himself in Christ, coming "out of infinite distances into finite nearness, from the unknowable to the knowable, from the method of expression appreciable by Deity alone to the method of self-expression understandable of the human." Let us dismiss any attempt to understand the mystery, and bear in mind rather that while "the subtlest and profoundest of men can not explain mysteries," yet as Christina Rossetti says, "the simplest person can appropriate and exult in them." More than nineteen hundred years ago the Word became flesh and dwelt among men in Galilee, lived and suffered and died as a perfect Man, and now at the right hand of God lives to make intercession for us.



The Earliest Representation of Christ (Painted on the wall of a Chapel in the Catacombs)

II Christ the Interpreter of God

Why the Word became Flesh. Great thinkers like Doctor Arnold and Charles Kingsley have confessed that they could only comprehend God as God is revealed in Christ. Henry Ward Beecher said that when he tried to think of God without thinking of Christ there went up in his mind "a vague mental mist." It was to clear away such mist and show us how we may come near to God, that Christ became flesh and tabernacled among men.

A word is a means of expression. God's Word is a means of expressing Himself to men. Not His only means, for the universe itself is His utterance, the Voice in the soul of man is His utterance, yet the former is an interpreter mainly of God's purpose and power, and the latter is so commingled with man's own littleness and imperfectness that it often fails to interpret aright. With Peter we say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Tennyson speaks of

"The world's great altar stairs
That slope through darkness up to God;"

we leave the darkness behind and climb, slowly though it be, upward toward God only because His Son Jesus Christ has revealed to us the way.

How Christ interprets God. To say that Christ showed to the world the "Very Self" of God is to say something that most people will understand. We may have heard of a man for years before we see him. Accurate observers may have described him; his biography may be known to us in every detail; and yet when we meet him face to face we know more of him in the first five minutes than we have gathered from all other sources put together. Individuality is its own interpreter. The crowning spiritual contribution of Jesus Christ to human kind was the declaration, "I and my Father are one."

Yet this one Life was also the revelation of human nature to itself. Man knows what he was meant to be since the world has seen Jesus Christ. To be true to our highest selves is to be like Him. *R. J. Campbell.*

The Perfect Pattern. A boy, who was learning his trade in a machine shop, was told to drill holes in some iron bars. He was given a bar in which the holes were in the right places, and was told to make his bars just like that one. He made a few bars all right, and then he mislaid the bar he was copying. He thought it would do just as well to make every bar like the last one, but in the first one he copied there was a very slight difference in the position of one hole, and in the next it was still worse. He copied the third bar from the second, and the fourth from the third, and in each the error grew greater. When his foreman came to examine his work, he found that two hundred bars must be thrown away, because the boy had not followed the right pattern.

In Jesus, God has given us the right pattern. Jesus is like God, and if we look upon Jesus' life and character we shall see what God Himself is. If that boy who was making holes in the bars had not been given a perfect pattern to follow, he could not have been blamed for making his bars wrong. God has shown Himself to us in His Son, and only by studying His teachings and obeying His words, can we make our lives pleasing to His Father and our Father.

We know God through Jesus Christ. Christ has lived, taught, suffered, and died that the hidden Presence might be no longer hidden to us; that we might better understand and have diviner intimacy with the Great Companion. He who would find God will find Him, as nowhere else, in the earthly life of Jesus the Christ. Let him for the purpose read and reread the story of that Life, and think that the Father is, in the infinite and eternal relations, what Jesus is in the temporal and limited ones. Would he know how God feels toward us in our sorrow, let him read the story of Christ's visit to the

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

sisters of Lazarus; toward the skeptic in his unbelief, let him read the story of Jesus and Thomas; toward the recreant disciple who has been unfaithful, let him read the interview between Christ and Peter by the shore of the Galilean Sea; toward the penitent sinner, outcast and despairing, let him read the story of Christ's pardon of the woman who was a sinner; toward the men who use religion as a cloak for self-service, let him read Christ's denunciation of the Pharisees who devoured widows' houses, and for pretense made long prayers. And then, before a God thus interpreted, let him come in his sorrow for comfort, in his doubts for better, clearer light, in his penitence for pardon, in his despair for a new courage, in his pride for condemnation. *Lyman Abbott.*

III Receiving or rejecting Christ

The Choice is left with us. "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God." Those who received Him and those who refused Him. Here we are come to a division in the multitude, which so far has been all one. All sons of God and all needing Christ, He came to them all, and some of them rejected Him. Here there is a primary reference to Jewish history. In these words, as if with one broad dash upon the wall, is sketched that tragedy which surpasses any other tragical passage in national history. It is the story of the Jewish people, chosen, privileged, obstinate, rebellious, ruined. But here again they are only representative. These words, "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not," are an assertion of the awful ultimateness of the power of free will in man. Behind everything else that settles a man's destiny there lies the power of his own decision whether all that is done upon him and done for him shall be effectual or not. How absolute and terrible that power is. Not even God's coming to a soul that belongs to God is so necessarily powerful that the man may not resist and in his obstinacy turn away. *Phillips Brooks, Sermons.*

What makes One a Child of God? True character is not born of blood. It does not depend upon inheritance. Men are neither great nor good merely because they have a great and good ancestry. When John wrote these words, the Jews prided themselves on being children of Abraham. They were born of good blood — and that was enough. And nobody could compete with them in character or in the race for acceptance with God, because they were born of Abraham. "We be children of Abraham," said the Jews to Christ. This was enough. At the time these words were written there were other men who said: "We be Romans." That was enough. "I am a Roman," was the proudest boast and the adequate boast. There was nothing more to be said. This was the final, the complete, claim. And yet the Jewish nation has disappeared as a nation, disappeared among all races. And the Roman nation has disappeared, broken down, though out of its roots has grown a new race and a new nation.

John says character does not depend on inheritance. Inheritance is valuable; it has its place; but it is not the foundation of character. Virtue can not be handed down from father to son. Character can not be so wrought that it may be easier for your son to keep from falling into sin. Weakness may be handed down, so that it will be easier for your son to fall into sin, but virtue

is victory by the individual himself over temptation that assails himself, and the victory can not be won by another and the defeat can not be suffered by another. Men are neither born sinners nor born saints. Character does not depend on blood.

Character is not due to inheritance, will power, culture; it is due to the life of God wrought by His peace in the soul of man. Born, not of blood, but of the God who has come into life in Christ, of the God who stands at the door of your heart and your life, saying, "Let me come into you and make you a child of God." *Lyman Abbott, The Life that really is.*

When to make the Choice. Robert Browning wrote of "Life's business being just the terrible choice." How true this is! The opportunity to make the great choice of all will not be always ours. "Twenty-five is a good age to make the great decision," says Ian Maclaren; "twenty is better, distinctly better; fifteen or sixteen is a grand age, when the lad is standing tiptoe just looking out upon the world, and looking into the Kingdom of God." Said Rabbi Eliezer, "Turn to God one day before your death." "But how can a man know the day of his death?" returned his disciples. "Therefore," wisely said the Rabbi, "you should turn to God to-day. Perhaps you may die to-morrow; thus, every day will be employed in returning."

When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all the nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

When Doctor Johnson lay in great fear of death and the judgment, Mrs. Adams sought to comfort him by saying, "You seem to forget the merits of our Redeemer." "I do not forget the merits of my Redeemer," said the honest old man, "but my Redeemer has said He will set some on His right hand and some on His left."

SENTENCE SERMONS

The first chapter of Genesis is the poem of the first morn — the light of day; the first chapter of John is the poem of the first-born — the Light of Life. *Edward B. Pollard.*

The first verse of John is a peal of thunder from the Son of Thunder, a voice from Heaven. *Bengel.*

I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it. *Browning.*

When Christ as the Life has entered the heart, He must and will as the Light shine out into the surrounding darkness. *Andrew Murray.*

Natural things are first understood and then believed; but supernatural mysteries must be first believed and then will be better understood. *Burkitt.*

By the judgment each man passes on Christ, he passes judgment on himself. *Marcus Dods.*

Give human nature reverence for the sake
Of One who bore it, making it divine
With the ineffable tenderness of God. *Whittier.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Before Abraham was, I am. John 8. 58.

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. John 14. 9.

God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. Heb. 1. 1.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Isa. 33. 6.

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8. 12.

Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God. 1 John 4. 2–3.

And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. John 17. 5.

God gave unto us eternal life, and this life was in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life. He that hath not the Son hath not the life. 1 John 5. 11–12.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

What I need to know about Christ is not how He can be both divine and human, but that He is my Redeemer.

Every one was meant to live in the light of God, and to know all the privileges as well as duties of sonship.

As the Son of God was the Word of God, so we, as children of God, should be words of God to others.

The presentation of Christ to us divides us, as it did the people of the first century, into two classes, those who accept and those who reject Him. In which class am I?

I believe that in Christ God the Father is revealed. In each lesson for the next six months I will carefully notice how He interprets for us the Father's will, and I will endeavor in my own life to be obedient to that will.

The New Year is just beginning. There is only one way whereby I can make the year 1908 the best and happiest year of my life, and that is by accepting Christ as my Saviour now and seeking to make my thoughts and deeds worthy of Him whose I am and whom I serve.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, we have the story of Christ's birth as it seemed at Bethlehem to Mary and the shepherds and the wise men; in John's Gospel we have the meaning of that birth as it seemed years afterward to that great apostle writing under the inspiration of God. "In the beginning was the Word," he tells us, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In that timeless beginning, before even the earth was created, He whom we know as Jesus Christ, whom John here calls the Word, because He was the revealed expression of God, existed in fellowship of equality with God. He revealed God's power in creation. He was the source of life. His life is the source of light in men, by which they discern

the true and the false. In the struggle between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, the darkness did not overwhelm the light, for God is stronger than evil.

In showing how the Word was received after being manifested among men, John naturally speaks first of John the Baptist who was sent to bear witness of Christ, and adds that John was only a lesser light, the true Light was Christ. The great tragedy of human history is the reception which the Incarnate Word received. He came first of all to His own people, the Jews, who as a people rejected Him; they knew Him not as the revealed Word of God. Some, however, there were who received Him, trusted in Him as the Messiah, and to them He gave the right to become the children of God. The spiritual birth of the children of God is due to the divine will alone, not to any human agency.

This Word of God, John joyfully testifies himself, became Man for a time and dwelt among them, and he with others had seen in His words and works the glory of the Father whose only begotten Son He is. With equal certainty we can affirm from our study of His life, so lofty and perfect that there is no one to be compared with Him, and of His thoughts, so sublime that we know they are divine, that He is the Christ, the Incarnate Word, God's Communication with us, the Revealer to us of our Father.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Gospel of St. John. See the Introduction in this book.

2. The relation of the first eighteen verses to the rest of St. John's Gospel. Is it in the nature of a preface, a statement of the plan of the Gospel, or is it rather, as Prof. Harnack declares, a postscript, a sort of "covering letter" intended to secure the favorable reception of the Gospel at the hands of cultivated Gentile or Hellenistic readers?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. With whom is John talking? (John 1. 19.) 2. Had John baptized any of the Pharisees and Sadducees? (Matt. 3. 7.) 3. Where had Jesus been shortly before His appearance to John and His disciples? (Matt. 4. 1–11.) 4. Read the account of the baptism of Jesus in Matt. 3. 13–17, Mark 1. 9–11, and Luke 3. 21, 22. 5. What is the significance of the expression "the Lamb of God" in verse 29? 6. What is said in John 3. 22–36; 5. 32–38; and 10. 41 about the testimony of the Baptist? 7. From all the Gospels gather all that John the Baptist said about Jesus and that Jesus said about him. See the Subject Index of your Bible. 8. Tell the story of John's death. (Matt. 14. 1–12.) 9. With the Baptist's mission of witnessing for Christ compare the purpose John had in writing his Gospel, as given by him in John 20. 31; and also with the purpose of the Apostle's work as given by Peter in Acts 1. 21, 22.

LESSON II — JANUARY 12

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

John 1. 25–34. (Read John 1. 19–34.) Commit vv. 29, 30.

Golden Text

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1. 29.

LESSON TEXT John 1. 25–34 TIME March, A. D. 27

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?
26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;
27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.
28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.
29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.
30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.
31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.
32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.
33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.
34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

25. *They.* The priests and Levites, verse 19. *Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?* R. V., *why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?* See verse 21. Proselytes were baptized in the second and third century and perhaps earlier; the objection was probably not to the rite of baptism, but to the fact that John baptized the Jews as well. They thought that only Elijah or a prophet or the Messiah Himself had authority to add the rite to the Mosaic institutions.

26. *John answered.* His reply is not a direct but an implied answer to their question. By what authority do I baptize? He who is my authority already stands among you; what I do is small indeed to what He will do. See Luke 3. 16, 17. *With water.* R. V., *in water.* See Matt. 3. 11. *There standeth one among you.* R. V., *in the midst of you standeth one.*

27. *He it is who coming after me.* R. V., *Even he that cometh after me. Is preferred before me.* Omitted in the R. V. Repeated from verses 15 and 30. *Whose shoe's latchet.* R. V., *the latchet of whose shoe. Latchet.* The thong or lace which bound the shoe or sandal to the foot.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST—*Frank Vincent Du Mond*

28. *Bethabara beyond Jordan.* R. V., *Bethany beyond the Jordan.*

29. *The next day John seeth Jesus.* R. V., *on the morrow he seeth Jesus.* The day after the questioning by the priests. Jesus had probably just returned from the wilderness where He had been tempted. *The Lamb.* A symbol of sacrifice. *The Lamb of God.* The sacrifice provided by God. See Isa. 53. 7. *Which.* R. V., *that. Taketh away.* Margin, *beareth.* See 1 John 2. 2; 3. 5; 4. 10. *The sin of the world.* Characteristic of John's Gospel is his proclamation that Jesus is the universal Christ, not the Christ of the Jews only.

30. *I said.* See verse 15. *Which is preferred before me.* R. V., *who is become before me.* Jesus whose earthly manifestation is made after me in time, is nevertheless in advance of me in importance, for His divine existence is from eternity.

31. *I knew him not.* Jesus and John were kinsmen, and though John had lived in the hill country of Hebron and Jesus in Nazareth, John may have known Him as a Boy or Man, but he did not know Him as the Messiah till this was revealed to him by God. How this knowledge came to him is explained in verses 32–34. *That he should be made manifest to Israel.* John's ministry was limited to the Israelites. *Therefore am I come baptizing with water.* R. V., *for this cause came I baptizing in water.*

32. *Record.* R. V., *witness. I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove.* R. V., *I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven.* See Matt. 3. 16, 17.

33. *He who sent me.* God. Compare the question of Jesus in Mark 11. 30. *With Water.* R. V., *in water. The same said.* R. V., *he said. Upon whom.* R. V., *upon whomsoever. Remaining on him.* R. V., *abiding upon him. He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.* R. V., *he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit.*

34. *And I saw and bare record.* R. V., *and I have seen, and have borne witness.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

26. *I baptize with water.* Purification of the body is a human instinct. It is based on the instinctive belief that an act of sin, or a state of sinfulness, needs purification of body. Hence the purificatory customs of Greece, the quinquennial lustrations of Rome, the sacred ablutions of the Egyptians, Jews, Scandinavians, Aztecs, Hindus, Moslems, Christians, etc. Recall how Pontius Pilate tried to satisfy his conscience by washing his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." In like manner, that famous order of chivalry called "Knights of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath," was so styled because the candidates were bathed the night before receiving their investiture. One of the fundamental distinctions of the Levitical ritual was its distinction between "clean and unclean." Recall its many washings; its laver; its water of separation; especially its treatment of leprosy, as meaning special defilement, needing special purification. Recall especially our King's teaching, that it is not bodily uncleanness, but sin itself which is the true defilement.

Ablution being a natural symbol of moral cleansing, our King's forerunner adopted it as his personal symbol, putting it forward as one of the character-

istic features of his desert ministry; so that his habit of baptizing gave him his own specific title, John the Baptizer. But John put into the old ablution a new meaning. It was as though he had said,—

"I indeed baptize you in water. But my baptism is no mere ceremonial cleansing, like the Pharisaic baptism of cups and pots and brazen vessels. My baptism is the ablution of repentance, that is, amendment of character." *George Dana Boardman, Ethics of the Body.*

32. *John bare record.* The student of the Gospel narrative, his eye fixed upon one central Figure, may easily overlook the large significance of the person and work of John. "Sent from God," says the record. Every man who fills a place in history and renders distinguished service to his generation is in a certain true sense "sent of God," but the word here means more. The reference is not to the fact that John belonged to the priesthood, and had the consecrated blood of Aaron in his veins. Rather that he was sent as a prophet is sent, bearing a message supernaturally given, and thus invested with an authority which no personal endowment, no sacred lineage, no human institution, ecclesiastical or civil, could confer.

He had what is so rarely found, self-knowledge, a thorough understanding of himself and his vocation, and this suggests one of the lessons to be learned from his life. He was conscious of a prophetic task, and had pondered Old Testament prophecy until its thought and spirit had poured into his very life. He perceived that the coming of the Messiah for the deliverance of Israel was conditional, that it depended in part upon the preparation to receive him which the Israelite community itself should make. The theocracy must make ready for the coming of its King; there must be a spiritual preparation, a revival of faith and obedience. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Now John, as Ewald has said, "recognized the divine call as directed in the first instance to himself." *He* was the nearest person he could speak to. Not waiting for the nation, not even waiting for the appearance of the Elijah who was to precede the Messiah, he bound his own soul before God, and there made ready for the King. Not dreaming that he himself was that Elijah, he passed into the wilderness and became Elijah—the Elijah that was to come. Thus it is, or may be, with us all. It is our ideals that shape our destiny.

"The thing we long for, that we are."

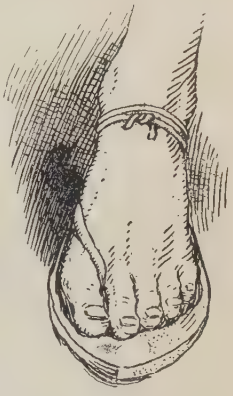
The power with which he brought his message to bear upon his generation may be measured by its effect. The trumpet blast of his voice shook the land. It awoke a reformation, a revival of spiritual life. Herod Antipas, as well as the rulers at Jerusalem, feared him. For, as Josephus relates, "the people were wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement by his words" and "seemed ready to do anything that he might advise." For not less than three years, we suppose, perhaps longer, he preached, taught, gathered a body of disciples, until his mission was accomplished, and he had, in the phrase of Scripture, made ready for the Lord "a prepared people." *William Arnold Stevens.*

32. *The Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven.* The purpose of the descent of the Spirit on Jesus was twofold. In John's Gospel it is represented as principally meant to certify the Baptist of the identity of the Messiah. But we can not exclude its effect on Jesus. For Him it was the divine anointing for his official mediatorial work. A king is king before he is anointed

or crowned. These are but the signs of what we may call the official assumption of His royalty. *Alexander Maclaren.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

27. *The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose.* Jesus, like other Orientals, wore sandals which were merely leather soles fastened to the feet by means of leather thongs. On entering a house these sandals were taken off and the feet dusted by a servant. So menial was this service held to be that the rabbis said, "Every service which a servant will perform for his master, a disciple will do for his rabbi, except loosing his sandal thong." Similar sandals are worn at the present time by inhabitants of the remote villages of Syria and the peasants of Greece, Italy, and Spain.



Modern Arab Sandal

29. *John seeth Jesus coming unto him.* Let us try to picture to ourselves what sort of dress Jesus habitually wore. Upon his head He must always have worn the turban, the national head-gear, used alike by rich and poor. Painters make a mistake when they represent Him bareheaded. The turban He wore was probably white. It was fastened under the chin by a cord, and at the side fell down to the shoulders and over the tunic. He wore his hair rather long, and His beard uncut. His tunic, the underneath vesture, was of one piece without seam. Over this He wore the *Talith,* loose and flowing. This mantle was not white, for we are told that it became white during the Transfiguration. It was not red, for that was only the military color. It is possible it was blue, for blue was then very common; or it may have been simply white with brown stripes. In any case, Jesus had at the four corners of his mantle the *Çiççith,* the blue or white fringes. He wore sandals on His feet, as we learn from John the Baptist; and when He was going from place to place, He doubtless wore a girdle round the loins and carried a stick in His hands. *Edmond Stapfer, Palestine in the Time of Christ.*

Outline Map

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Coast-line of Palestine. Few regions have as straight a coast-line as Palestine. About a third of the distance down from the north is Mount Carmel, and above this headline there is a curve in the coast.

The Jordan River System. Directly east of Mount Carmel — a distance of thirty miles — is the Sea of Galilee. North of this lake is the little Lake Huleh. From four streams which unite above Lake Huleh the Jordan River flows southward, through Lake Huleh and the Sea of Galilee, and then onward till it is lost in the Dead Sea.

The Jordan Valley, through which the Jordan River flows, is a deep chasm from five to fifteen miles broad.

Just below Lake Huleh the valley sinks below the sea level; at the Sea of Galilee it is 680 feet below, and at the Dead Sea 1,300 feet below, the lowest valley on the surface of the earth. "There may be something on the surface of another planet to match the Jordan Valley — there is nothing on this." In this trench below the level of the sea, Christ lived and worked during the greater part of His public ministry.

The Scene of John the Baptist's Ministry. John the Baptist began his preaching in "the wilderness of Judea," the district west of the Dead Sea, but he moved northward into the Jordan Valley and baptized in the River Jordan. The site of Bethany (Bethabara, in the Authorized Version) beyond Jordan is not definitely known. The traditional site is nearly opposite Jericho, where there is a heap of ruins bearing in Arabic the name of the Monastery of St. John. Here at Easter time great multitudes come to bathe in the Jordan and carry away in bottles some of its water. Recent scholarship has located Bethany near a ford (now Abârah) about fifteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

John the Apostle, continuing the prologue to his Gospel, seems to hear again the voice of John the Baptist preaching to the crowds in the open air, witnessing to Jesus, and proclaiming that though Jesus came after him in point of time, yet He was before him in point of influence and power, even as in His divine nature He had existed before him. Then John the Apostle adds his own testimony to that of the Baptist; all of us, like the Baptist, in receiving Jesus received the gift of grace. In the Old Testament times, men were governed by commands given through Moses; but with the coming of Jesus the force of law gave place to the power of love. In Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, has been revealed the invisible Father.

Authorities do not agree as to the length of Jesus' ministry. The dates given in this book at the head of the lesson text are based on the assumption that Jesus was born December 25, B. C. 5, that His public ministry began about January, A. D. 27, and lasted a little over three years, His crucifixion taking place in April, A. D. 30.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Why do we call this year 1908 instead of some other number? Do you know how years were reckoned before Christ's birth? Sometimes they were reckoned from the year which was called the year of the beginning of the world, and sometimes from the year in which the city of Rome was founded. It was not until the sixth century after the birth of Christ that it was decided to make a new reckoning of time, and call the year in which Christ was born the year 1. Dionysius Exiguus, the learned monk who made the computation, made a mistake of about four years. When it was discovered that Jesus was born four years (and one week, if we accept December 25 as the day of His birth) before the year which is named A. D. 1, it was too late to correct the error, for this new reckoning had long been in use. At the beginning of the year 1, Jesus, then, was four years old;

at the beginning of the year two, He was five years old; of the year 3, He was six years old. Thus you see we must always add three years to the date of any event in the life of Christ to find out His age at that time.

The date given for our lesson to-day is A. D. 27. How old, then, was Jesus? John tells us nothing about His earlier life. What do we know about it from the other Gospel writers?

For Older Pupils. Some one has said that the common newspaper term, an assignment, aptly describes John's life work. He was "a man sent," forgetful of self, completely engrossed in the work of carrying out the assignment of God. His austere life in the desert, his marvelous faith in Jesus as the Son of God, his self-abnegation in a preëminently self-seeking age, his fearless, uncompromising denunciation of the evils of his time, and his tragic death, have made him one of the most interesting of Bible characters.

Dr. George Matheson thus compares him with the Apostles: "In order of time, John the Baptist is the first Christian. He discerned the greatness of Jesus when, outwardly, Jesus was not great. He was the earliest who fixed his eyes upon the miracle of Christ's character. So far from contrasting unfavorably with the Apostles, he actually begins where they end. The latest words of the Apostles is not the outward miracle but the blameless life; it may be said of every one of them that to their autumn years 'The Lamb is all the glory.' But that can be said of the Baptist's spring. He antedated their experience. While they were hunting for a sign of the flesh, he was pursuing a sign of the spirit. While they sought an eagle, he followed the track of a dove. While they waited for the strength of a lion, he placed all his hopes in the spotlessness of a lamb."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sin of the World!

What John's Words meant. During his wilderness life, John the Baptist had meditated deeply on the Old Testament prophecies, and when he pointed out Jesus to his disciples and used this striking term, the Lamb of God, he no doubt had in mind the prophecy of Isaiah where Christ is described as the lamb led to the slaughter, and it is said that as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Then, too, he would think of the great day of atonement, when the priest with his hands on the scapegoat confessed over it the sins of the people, and the goat thus symbolically sin-laden was led off to perish in the desert depths. The passover was close at hand, and the Baptist could see flocks of sheep and lambs being driven to Jerusalem for sacrifice.

To the people of Jerusalem, moreover, who were accustomed to seeing a lamb sacrificed each day on the great altar, one every morning and one every evening, the term Lamb of God, was full of sacrificial meaning. Its application to Jesus they could not, however, comprehend. It was a dark saying to them. They were looking for a kingly Messiah, not one who had come to suffer. Jesus' own disciples, even after all His teaching, when the day of His sacrificial death approached, could not comprehend the meaning in these words of John the Baptist. Whence had John his knowledge? Perhaps from his own prophetic insight of the Old Testament prophecies. Perhaps

from Jesus Himself, with whom he may have talked after His return from the temptation. We can but marvel at his knowledge, for there is no mystery in the Scriptures deeper than this, that by the blood of the Lamb of God the sins of the world are taken away.

The Meaning of the Sacrifice. It is not very easy to understand what sacrifice was. In one of Dr. Walter C. Smith's poems occur these lines:

Vainly I seek to know his mind
Who smote the lamb with gleaming knife,
And sprinkled blood, and hoped to find
The peace of a diviner life.

But o'er the vague, vast chasm that parts
Their thought from mine, I cannot go;
I wot not how their troubled hearts
Were calmed by making blood to flow.

I am sure many will feel that this expresses their sentiments. When we go to the house of God, we go to pray, and we go to hear the preaching of the Gospel, but it is very difficult to understand the state of mind and feeling of those who went to the house of God to sacrifice. Still, you may depend upon it that their state of mind was at bottom the same as ours. It was only the form and expression that was different.

Try to understand the action of the man away up in Galilee, separating from his flock the animal that was to be the victim. Imagine him picking out the best one, the spotless one, and getting it ready to go away to the temple. You see there was something very tangible there. Just try to think how difficult it would be for one of our farmers when he was going to worship to give as much as that. When he got to the temple and saw the blood of the victim flowing from the sacrificial knife, what was in his mind? Do you not think it was this — that if perfect justice had been done it was he who would have been sacrificed? He had forfeited his life by his sin, but that penitent consciousness and that confession thus exhibited, not in words but in act, were received in place of the sacrifice that should have been made of his own life. And then in token that he had been forgiven and accepted, the scene closes with a joyful feast in the precincts of the temple.

That seems to me to give us a great deal of light upon Calvary. As I stand at Calvary and see the dying Saviour I see that is what in justice should happen to me, but when I make that humble confession in spirit and in truth, it is accepted in place of the life due to the justice of God. Surely the sight of the Saviour sacrificing Himself on Calvary is far more fitted to impress the heart than the death of the bleeding victim of the Jew, but, at all events, depend upon it, it is on the depth and permanence of the impression made on our mind and heart by what took place at the cross, that the strength and tenderness of our Christian life depend. Sacrifice is now abolished forever in the one sacrifice on which the eyes both of God and of penitent men are forever fixed. *James Stalker.*

II In Honor preferring One Another

The Self-effacement of John the Baptist. In the tenth verse of the twelfth chapter of Romans, Paul exhorts his readers to "be kindly affectioned

one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another." He who is "kindly affectioned to another" will not deem that other's good a detraction from his own, but will rejoice in his preferment over himself. John the Baptist was great enough to rejoice when he saw his own disciples leaving him to become the disciples of Jesus. He was so great that to the multitude it was he rather than Jesus who was the hero of the hour. But because he was so great he realized his own littleness when compared with Jesus. "Seen from the low ground, the star may seem close to the top of the mountain; seen from the mountain-top it is recognized as infinitely above it." The multitude on the low ground could not distinguish between John and Jesus; John on the mountain-top could see how infinitely above him was the star. "He that cometh after me is become before me," he says without envy, and later he declares even with joy that "He must increase, but I must decrease."

One who would be First. Dr. Henry van Dyke has a poem entitled *The Vain King.* This king considered not his right to rule as a great trust, cared not to serve his people, but was consumed with a desire to be first in everything; in music, hunting, painting, speaking, no one should be hailed as his superior.

"No conscious child, that, spoiled with praising, tries
At every step to win admiring eyes,—
No favorite mountebank, whose acting draws
From gaping crowds loud thunder of applause,
Was vainer than the king; his only thirst
Was to be hailed, in every race, the first."

Walking along the river one day with his courtiers the king met a fisherman. The courtiers pronounced this fisherman the master of his craft, so large were the fish he had caught, and at once the king was filled with envy. Shall any one be considered a better fisherman than himself? He challenged the fisherman to a contest. The latter accepted, but made this condition:

"The fisherman who brings the least to land
Shall do whate'er the other may command."

The king agreed. He lost the contest, and the result comes as a surprise:

"Eager to win in every trivial strife,—
Go! Thou shalt fish for minnows all thy life,

commanded his successful rival.

"Wrathful, the king the scornful sentence heard;
He strove to answer, but he only chirr-r-ed;
His Tyrian robe was changed to wings of blue,
His crown became a crest,—away he flew!
And still, along the reaches of the stream,
The vain Kingfisher flits, an azure gleam,
You see his ruby crest, you hear his jealous scream."

Shall you ever hear the kingfisher's jealous scream without thinking of the poet's lesson?

Unselfish Joy. Sakati was a Mohammedan saint, who had never ceased for twenty years to implore divine pardon because he once exclaimed, "Praise be to God!" The occasion for this exclamation and the sin that lay in the words he thus explained: "A fire broke out in Bagdad and I was told that

my shop had escaped, whereupon I uttered those words; and even to this moment I repent of having said so, because it showed that I wished better to myself than to others."

How to meet the Superiority of Others. There are two maxims of Goethe's which contain the pure gold of truth in one of the most trying relations of life,—our relation to those who are developing gifts and capacities above us: "Against the great superiority of another there is no remedy but love;" and "To praise a man is to put one's self on his level." In these brief and pithy sayings is contained the whole philosophy of a noble attitude towards superiority of all kinds. There are many who can not meet the test of having friends and associates pass them in the race by force of greater gifts, and who note the development of talent in others, if not with envy, at least with coldness and silence. In such an attitude there is not only a confession of defeat, but the loss of a great opportunity,—the loss that is always coming to the egotist. A gift of any kind is a resource added to life, a new contribution to the capital which makes society rich. The right-minded man rejoices when the commonwealth increases, and finds delight in the work which brings in the added riches; the fact that he lives in a modest house makes him all the more appreciative of the general beauty of the metropolis in which he is a citizen. Moreover, as Goethe suggests, we share in great gifts by recognizing and honoring them. To keep Shakespeare a closed volume because we envy his marvelous power is not to harm Shakespeare but to impoverish ourselves; to take delight in Shakespeare is to partake of his genius and put ourselves on his level. In like manner, to be the first to recognize a dawning superiority in some one who stands near us is not only to give our own nature a beautiful and worthy expression, but to share in the development of a new and inspiring gift. The power of appreciation is itself a beautiful gift, and its culture means the possession of a talent as generous as it is beautiful. To possess it is to drive out the shadow of envy, and to give swift hospitality to truth and beauty. We reveal our own natures by our attitude towards superiority in others. *H. W. Mabie, Works and Days.*

III Witness bearing

The Witness of John the Baptist. John the Baptist "came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him," declares the Evangelist. "John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was He of whom I said, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me." Seven times in the first chapter of his Gospel the Evangelist speaks of the witness-bearing of the Baptist. Are not we, too, as Christians, witness bearers? Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock rightly declared that "We are here to represent Christ—to present Him again, to re-present Him."

Witnessing by your Lives. Benjamin Franklin learned that plaster sown in the fields would make things grow. He told his neighbors; but they did not believe him and they argued with him to prove that plaster could be of no use at all to grass or grain.

After a little while he allowed the matter to drop and said no more about it. But he went into the field early the next spring and sowed some grain. Close by the path, where men would walk, he traced some letters with his

finger and put plaster into them and then sowed his seed broadcast in the field.

After a week or two the seed sprang up. His neighbors, as they passed that way, were very much surprised to see, in brighter green than all the rest of the field, the writing in large letters, "This has been plastered." Benjamin Franklin did not need to argue with his neighbors any more about the benefit of plaster for the fields. For as the season went on and the grain grew, these bright, green letters just rose up above all the rest until they were a kind of relief-plate in the field,—"This has been plastered."

I think that Jesus Christ wants to write upon our hearts and lives these words: "These people are Christians." Do you know, children, a good many people profess to believe that there is no virtue in the teachings of Christ; that the Gospel is of little value? They are ready to argue about it; and we might argue with them a long time to no purpose. But if we will let Christ with His finger write upon our hearts just as He will, then when our lives show the new growth under the power of His grace, people will read in us (not in a printed book, though it be in the Bible itself, but in us), "This is Christianity." And if they see that we are patient and gentle and unselfish, kind and thoughtful and pure, that we never speak words of untruth or ungraciousness, that we do not live to please ourselves chiefly,—they will notice the great difference between the rest of the human field and our lives, and they will say: "These people are truly Christians." They will never find any argument against Christianity when it is shown in our lives, you may be very sure. *Frank T. Bayley,* in *Little Ten-minutes.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

If you and I have not seen God, we can not bear witness to God. *Lyman Abbott.*

My true disciples do not believe in Luther but in Jesus Christ. *Martin Luther.*

The true man thinks last of himself. *Schiller.*

More people would seek to be clothed with the Holy Spirit, were it not that the wearer is made invisible by the investiture. *Alexander Maclaren.*

Do you want Christ to represent you above as you represent Him here below? *The Optimist.*

As we must render an account of every idle word, so must we likewise of our idle silence. *Ambrose.*

Men are not saved by the sacrifices they make but by accepting the Sacrifice God makes for them. *C. M. Lamson.*

The saving work of Jesus Christ for man as a sinner,—that is what the Atonement means to us; I think it surpasses all explanations of it, just as life is more than biology. *Henry van Dyke.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. Rev. 7. 10.

Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having

died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. 1 Pet. 2. 24.

Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. Rev. 5. 9.

And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin. 1 John 3. 5.

Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good. 1 Cor. 10. 24.

Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth . . . He was the lamp that burneth and shineth; and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light. But the witness which I have is greater than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. John 5. 33, 35, 36.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Truth to John the Baptist was more than titles. Am I like him in being careful to maintain the truth, or am I unlike him in being willing to accept undeserved honor from others?

In his third Epistle John describes Diotrephes as one "who loveth to have the preëminence." Do those words describe me?

It is the work, not the worker, who is of consequence to the world.

To be glad when others are glad, to rejoice when others are praised, to seek the happiness of others rather than my own, to desire the preferment of others instead of myself — this shall be the spirit I will seek to cultivate.

"If I stay another week in your home," said Lord Peterborough to Fénelon, "I shall become a Christian despite myself." Does my home life prove to others that I am a follower of Christ? Would my daily life influence another to become a Christian?

A Christian who is strong in his faith would naturally be courageous in his confession of Christ. Am I? Am I ready and willing to tell others about the musician who taught me how to play, the artist who taught me how to draw, but unwilling to acknowledge the Christ who taught me how to live?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

In thought to-day we stand on the banks of the Jordan where John is baptizing. Priests and Levites are approaching from Jerusalem. What do these men, members of the great court called the Sanhedrin, want of this rugged prophet of the wilderness? They are a committee sent to find out who this man is who has made such a stir in their world and gathered about himself so great a concourse of followers. "Are you the Messiah?" they ask him. "By no means," returns John. "Elias, then?" "No, not Elias." "A prophet?" "Not even a prophet," he modestly says. "We must have an answer to give those who sent us. Tell us who you are." "I will tell you who I am; I am a man of no consequence, I am but a voice crying out in the wilderness, Prepare for the coming of the Lord." "On what authority, then, do you baptize, making Jews themselves submit to a rite suitable only for proselytes?" "He who is my authority is already here; the Messiah, the Coming One who has already come, and you know Him not. I indeed bap-

tize in water to prepare for His baptizing with the Spirit, but I am not worthy to serve Him as a slave, not worthy even to unloose the thong of His shoe."

The next day John is again surrounded by his followers. Along the highway flocks of sheep are being driven to Jerusalem to be sacrificed at the feast of the passover. Suddenly the central Figure of all human history is seen quietly walking among the crowd. The inspiration of divine testimony at His baptism and the triumph of His recent victory over the threefold temptation are still with Jesus. John's keen eye discovers Him, and pointing to Him he exclaims with prophetic vision, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. There is the One of whom I have been telling you, the One who shall be my successor, the One far mightier than I. To make Him known to Israel am I come baptizing in water, yet I knew Him not as the Messiah until I saw the Spirit descending upon Him, in the shape, as it were, of a dove. He from whom I have my commission had made known to me that the One on whom the Spirit came and abode was the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This I saw, and I bare record that He is the Son of God."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. St. John's Gospel as the Gospel of a sevenfold witness. "Of the Father (5. 34, 37); The Son (8. 14); the Spirit (15. 26); of Scripture (5. 39–46); of the Forerunner (1. 7); of the disciples (15. 27); of Christ's works (10. 25)."

2. The minister of Christ is but a herald to prepare His coming; and then, and only then, has he done his work when he has endeavored to detach trust and admiration from himself and to fasten them upon Jesus Christ; and when he feels that he is becoming every day less and less necessary to those whom he has taught, because he has imparted to them all he knows and led them to the everlasting fountain which shall never be exhausted. *F. W. Robertson.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. "The next day after," verse 35, looks back to what verse? (29) 2. Who were the two disciples mentioned in this verse? Why is it probable that the unnamed disciple was John? What is John's usual manner of referring to himself? (See John 13. 23; 18. 15; 19. 26; 20. 3; 21. 20.) 3. What city was the birthplace of Nathanael? (John 21. 2.) 4. Why is Andrew described as Simon Peter's brother? 5. How many disciples were called in two days? Name the other disciples. 6. By what title was the Baptist called by his disciples? (John 3. 26.) 7. What did Jesus say about the Scribes and Pharisees and the title of Rabbi? (Matt. 23. 1–8). 8. What do the Gospels and the Book of Acts tell about Andrew? About Philip? See Subject Index of your Bible. 9. On what occasion did Jesus give Simon the name of Peter? (Matt. 16. 13–19.) 10. Recall the story of Jacob's receiving the name of Israel, one of last year's lessons. (Gen. 32. 22–32.) 11. Give an account of the later more formal calling of the two pairs of brothers as recorded in Matthew. (4. 18–22.) 12. What proverb declared that no prophet could come from Galilee? (John 7. 52.)

JESUS AND HIS FIRST DISCIPLES

John 1. 35–49. (Read John 1. 35–51.) Commit vv. 35–37.

Golden Text

We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth. John 1. 45.

LESSON TEXT John 1. 35–49 TIME March, A. D. 27

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;
36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!
37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.
38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?
39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.
40 One of the two which heard John *speak,* and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.
42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.
43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.
44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.
46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.
47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!
48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.
49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

35. *Again the next day after John stood.* R. V., *Again on the morrow John was standing.* On the first day of the coming of the deputation from Jerusalem John proclaimed the Messiah (verse 26); on the second, he pointed Jesus out to his disciples as the Lamb of God (verse 29); and on the third day John's disciples followed Jesus (verses 35, 37). The imperfect tense, *was standing,* may, as Dr. Vincent suggests, include the idea of waiting, standing in expectancy. *Two of his disciples.* Andrew (verse 40) and probably John. The word disciples means literally learners.

36. *And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith.* R. V., *and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God!* The day

before John had said this, but his disciples then probably hesitated to leave their old master; now they decide to follow Jesus. This is the last time that we hear of the meeting of Jesus and the Baptist. "So vivid was the impression made on John the Apostle that he applies the name 'Lamb' to the risen Saviour more than seventy times in his Book of Revelation." *New Century Bible.*

37. *They followed Jesus.* Compare Matt. 4. 18–22; Mark 1. 16–20; Luke 5. 1–11. This record in John is, no doubt, of an earlier and less formal call than that recorded in the Synoptic Gospels.

38. *Then Jesus turned and saw them.* R. V., *And Jesus turned and beheld them. What seek ye?* "He opened their mouth because he wished to fill it," says an ancient writer. *Rabbi.* R. V., *Teacher. Rabbi* was a title of respect, derived from a Hebrew root meaning *great,* and applied by the Jews to their honored teachers. The term originated in the schools of Hillel and Shimei, in the time of Herod the Great. The Baptist's disciples called him Rabbi. See John 3. 26. *Being interpreted.* From this and similar explanations (verses 41, 42), it is believed that John wrote especially for the Greeks, who would not understand such Jewish terms. *Where dwellest thou?* R. V., *Where abidest thou?*

39. *Come and see.* R. V., *Come, and ye shall see. They came and saw where he dwelt.* R. V., *they came therefore and saw where he abode. For it was.* R. V., *it was. About the tenth hour.* Four P. M. The Jews reckoned time from sunrise to sunset; this was the Babylonian method which was followed also by the Greeks of Asia Minor for whom John wrote.

40. *Which.* R. V., *that.*

41. *He first findeth.* R. V., *he findeth first.* Andrew sought his brother Simon, and John probably sought his brother James, but Andrew was first successful. *Messias.* R. V., *Messiah. The Christ.* R. V., *Christ. Christ* means *Anointed.* See Psalm 2. 2. ὁ Χριστος, (Christ, the Anointed One) is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *Messiah.* Three times it is recorded that Andrew led others to Jesus: 1. 41; 6. 8; 12. 22.

42. *And he brought him to Jesus.* R. V., *he brought him unto Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said.* R. V., *Jesus looked upon him, and said. Jona.* R. V., *John. A stone.* R. V., *Peter.* Cephas, the Aramaic name, and πετρος, Petros, Peter, the Greek name, means *a stone,* "a detached piece of rock." This saying of Jesus was a prophecy of what Simon was to become in the Christian church. See Matt. 16. 13–19.

43. *The day following Jesus would go forth . . . and findeth . . . and saith.* R. V., *On the morrow he was minded to go forth . . . and he . . . and Jesus saith. The day following* was the fourth day in this accurately given chronology, the fourth from the coming of the members of the Sanhedrin, verse 19. Jesus decided to go from the other side of the Jordan into Galilee. *Philip.* In the Synoptic Gospels Philip is mentioned only in the lists of the Twelve. See John 6. 5–7; 12. 20–22; 14. 8, 9.

44. *Of Bethsaida, the city of.* R. V., *from Bethsaida, of the city of.*

45. *Nathanael.* Probably the same person as Bartholomew. John does not mention Bartholomew; the Synoptists do not mention Nathanael. His name is always coupled with that of Philip in the lists of the Apostles, except in Acts 1. 13. As Simon was called Barjona, so it is thought that Nathanael may have been called Bar-Tolmai, Bartholomew, son of Tolmai. *Moses in the law*

did write. R. V., *wrote.* The reference is to the promises of a Messiah in Genesis and Deuteronomy. *Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.* Joseph was the reputed father of Jesus. It was customary among the Jews to distinguish a person by giving the name of his father and of his place of residence. The words are Nathanael's.

46. *Can there any good thing?* R. V., *Can any good thing. Nazareth.* Nazareth was not far from Cana, Nathanael's home; he knew the rival village too well to think well of it.

47. *An Israelite indeed.* Not merely an Israelite by name and birth, but by character, one who was true to the name of Israel. *In whom there is no guile.* Nothing of the characteristic fault of Jacob. Recall the giving of the name Israel to Jacob, in Gen. 32.

48. *Before that.* R. V., *Before. Under the fig-tree.* It has been suggested that this may have been on the traditional site of Peniel.

49. *Nathanael answered and said unto him.* R. V., *Nathanael answered him. Rabbi.* This title of respect he had omitted before, verse 48. *The King.* R. V., *King.* Both phrases, Son of God and King of Israel, meant to the Jews the Messiah.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

38. *Where abidest thou?*

Master, where abidest Thou?
We would leave the past behind,
We would scale the mountain's brow,
Learning more Thy heavenly mind.
Canst Thou take our sins away?
May we find repose in Thee?
From Thy gracious lips to-day
As of old, breathes "Come and see." *The Three Wakings.*

43. *Follow me.* The finding of the one was not the finding of the other. For John and Andrew there was the talk with Jesus through the hours of that never-to-be-forgotten evening; for Simon, the heart-searching word, convincing him he was known and his future read off; for Philip, a peremptory command; and for Nathanael, a gracious courtesy, disarming him of prejudice, assuring him of a perfect sympathy in the breast of the Lord. Thus there are those who seek Christ, those who are brought by others to Christ, those whom Christ seeks for Himself, those who come without doubts, and those who come with doubts. *George Reith, The Gospel of John.*

46. *Come and see.* What a comforting thing that Philip did not say, "Well, Nathanael, lets argue this out about Nazareth." Then if it is going to be a debate between Nathanael, who knows all about the Jewish theology, and Philip, who does not know any theology at all, Nathanael is going to win, and Philip is going to be beaten. But a shrewd man is Philip. He did not know books, but he knew life. He says, "Oh, no, Nathanael, I will not argue with you. Put that book away, Nathanael. There is a better way for you and a better way for me. Clever as you are, you are on the wrong road. Nathanael, I saw Him. You have never seen His eyes as I have seen them. You have never heard the ring in His voice. You never felt the power that I felt when He said, 'Follow me.' And you never heard what He said, as

we walked along the road together, and I told Him I had a friend in Cana who wished to see His face. Nathanael, come and see Him yourself face to face." *John Watson.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

38. *Where abidest thou?* The multitudes who came to hear the preaching of John the Baptist could have had no other abiding places than the temporary *succôth,* or booths. The sides of these booths were quickly constructed by interweaving branches of palm or terebinth or brushwood. Over the top the useful *abba,* or cloak, was often thrown. Such a shelter the Galilean peasants of to-day build for themselves as a protection from the wind when overtaken on a journey by nightfall.

45. *Moses in the law and the prophets wrote.* The Jews divided their Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures into three great parts; the "Law" or "Torah"; the "Prophets" or "Nebiim," which included both the prophetical and the historical books; and "the Holy Writings" or "Kethubim" which included the poetical and other books.

48. *When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.* The prophets Micah and Zechariah speak of sitting under one's own fig tree just as we speak of being at home. The large, thick leaves of a fig tree afford a dense shade under which Orientals delight to take their meals or enjoy their mid-day rest. Jewish writers speak also of the fig tree as a fitting place for meditation and prayer.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethsaida, the early home of Andrew and Peter and Philip, was on the road which Jesus would take in going from Bethany beyond Jordon to Cana in Galilee, where He wrought His first miracle. It was on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, but its exact location is not known. This was one of the three cities — Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum — upon which Jesus pronounced His woes, because in them most of His mighty works had been done, and they repented not (Mark 11. 20–24).

Nazareth is eighteen miles west of the Sea of Galilee, in the hill country. It lies in an elevated basin surrounded by hills, "like a rose encircled by its petals" says an ancient writer, and the houses climb up the hillsides. From Nazareth Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem to be taxed, and to Nazareth they returned with Jesus after the flight into Egypt. Here Jesus lived till the beginning of His public ministry, and then He made Capernaum His home.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The lesson begins with the events of the morrow following the testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. As Matthew Vassar, the founder of Vassar College, and a minister whom he was going to help in his work, were passing a

blacksmith's shop on their way from the railroad station the pastor said, "That man by the forge does not believe in Christ. I hope you will have an opportunity to speak with him while you are here with us." "Dear man," said Uncle John, as his friends all called Mr. Vassar, "I'll go and see him now," and he started toward the forge. The astonished pastor saw the blacksmith drop the horse's foot that he was shoeing and listen quietly to Mr. Vassar, and very soon saw them both kneel in prayer behind the forge.

The Apostle John in the words of our lesson to-day tells us about several men who were just as eager to bring others to believe in Jesus. Who were they? What two men went directly from their talk with the Baptist about Jesus to Jesus Himself, and then from their talk with Jesus to talk with others about Him?

John the Evangelist
(After Holbein)

For Older Pupils. These last verses of the first chapter of John form one of the famous "personal work verses" of the Bible. There are several "findeths" in it. Where are they? John the Baptist findeth Andrew and John, Andrew findeth his brother Peter, John probably findeth his brother James, Jesus findeth Philip, and Philip in his turn findeth Nathanael. "We have found," — εὑρήκαμεν, eurekamen — says the text so often that it has gained the name of "the chapter of Eurekas." Eureka, our exclamation of triumph over a discovery, is attributed to the exclamation of Archimedes — "Eureka, eureka! I have found it! I have found it!" — on suddenly discovering a method for finding out how much alloy there was in the gold of King Hiero's crown. Perhaps we are more apt to connect "eureka" with substances than with persons, with things physical than with things spiritual, and we shall find it helpful to think about the joy of the discovery of the Messiah which His first followers experienced.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Personal Work

The Starter. It takes two boys to fly a kite. When John has the kite all made, he must call his chum in to hold it. The chum is a starter. He holds it steady, and at the word gives it a little push, and up it goes.

Speak to that kite that is soaring high above our heads: "Tell us how you got up so high. How did it happen?" This is the answer: "I was out in the field lying on the ground. I felt a gentle pull but I could not get up, then I felt a firm hand take hold of me and lift me up. Next there came a pull, and

this same hand gave me a gentle push and up I went. That firm hand was the starter."

Do you see that man high up above his fellow-men? If you are told his name — Peter — you will at once know who he is. "Tell us how you rose to such a height, Peter." Listen: "This is the way it began. I was a fisher-boy, and was rough and impulsive and profane. I went to school to Jesus, and I owe all to Him. But let me tell you of the start. I had a brother, named Andrew. He heard of Jesus, and one day he took me and brought me to Jesus. He is my starter. He gave me the push that started me upward." *Sydney Strong, Talks to Boys and Girls.*

What may be the Results? Andrew found his brother Peter and led him to Christ. Henceforth it is Peter, not Andrew, that we hear of as the man of action. On that marvelous day of Pentecost, several years after this memorable evening's work of Andrew, Peter swayed three thousand men and women over to Christ's cause and service. Some one has said that if Peter were the spiritual father of all these converts, certainly Andrew was their spiritual grandfather. During one term at Yale the elder President Dwight influenced a large number of students to become Christians, and it is said that through their efforts throughout a lifetime fifty thousand were led into Christ's kingdom.

A Sunday-school teacher called at a shoe store where a young man of his class was a clerk, and found the lad in the back part of the store arranging shoe boxes, and there he urged him to become a Christian. This teacher's influence led him to Christ. The lad was Dwight L. Moody, the great evangelist, who came into personal contact with more people and influenced a greater number for Christ than any one man of whom we have knowledge.

II Why Some Christians are not Personal Workers

A Consciousness of an Inconsistent Life. Many a Christian has been asked to speak to some one with whom he has influence and endeavor to lead him to decide for Christ, and has replied that he could not, that he has lost his influence as a Christian over that one through deeds of his own inconsistent with his profession. Who is there who does not have cause to regret that what he is is so far from being what he would be! There is a lesson for every one in Mr. Moody's fight with his hasty temper, and his readiness to acknowledge his fault. On one occasion after the close of his sermon he was standing in the hallway and urging people to come to his after-meeting, when a man stepped up and spoke some very insulting words to him. Quick as a flash Mr. Moody thrust him off and sent him stumbling down the steps into the vestibule. Those standing by said to themselves that a man with so hasty a temper as that could have no Christian influence with them. But Mr. Moody began his second meeting with these words: "Friends, before beginning to-night I want to confess that I yielded to my temper out in the hall, and if that man is present whom I thrust away from me in anger, I want to ask his forgiveness and God's. Let us pray." His humble apology and sweet spirit created a wonderful impression, and the meeting seemed to be helped by the incident.

Natural Timidity. This is a very real difficulty with many who sincerely wish to be faithful workers for Christ. There is encouragement in the experience of Dr. Wilton Merle Smith while a student at Princeton. Mr. John

R. Mott, one of the most successful of personal workers, tells the story. On the day of prayer for colleges Doctor Smith together with several other classmates was led to resolve to speak to at least one person about the claims of Christ before retiring that night. He said it was the most miserable day he ever spent. He put in the whole forenoon without speaking to his man. The afternoon made him more miserable than the forenoon. He had a terrible time at supper because he had one good opportunity and did not improve it. He went out into the night and walked on the campus, fighting, fighting. He said, "I am a man of my word, but how shall I do it?" He saw a light up in the third story in the window of the room of the man over whom he had influence in the base-ball team. He fought his way up one flight, and then up the second, and here he had the hardest fight, and after reaching the third flight, stood in front of the door and had another; and then he hit the door, and had to go in. His friend said: "What's the matter, Billy? What's the matter?" "I have to come to ask you why you don't become a Christian." His fellow-student broke into tears, strong man that he was, as he exclaimed, "I have been waiting here for hours for you to come and ask me that question."

Ignorance of Method. Very many Christians there are who admit their duty, and even wish to claim their privilege of speaking to others about their relationship to God, but are prevented by a consciousness of their ignorance of how to lead others to Him. Yet how to overcome this ignorance they well know. It can only be accomplished by a faithful study of the Bible for the purpose of learning how to make its words effective as a guide, and by prayerful reliance on God's help. Possessed of the faith of Mr. Moody, "faith in God that He is, and faith in God that He will use us," what the most ignorant and untrained Christian worker can accomplish for Christ has been shown again and again in the lives of those whom we know and in the lives of many whom the world knows. "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

Genuine Interest in Others' Welfare is Necessary. There are some Christians who, as a bishop once expressed it, are "too polite to speak to a man about his eternal interests." A college professor who never failed to speak personally to his own students about their spiritual life was asked if the students did not resent his appeals. "No," was the reply; "nothing is of such interest to any man as his own soul and its condition. He will never resent words of warning or comfort if they are prompted by genuine feeling."

"Prompted by genuine feeling,"—does not this express one of the essential qualifications of a successful worker for Christ? In the Baptist's words to his disciples, in Andrew's call to Peter, in Philip's testimony to Nathanael, do we not see each worker's joy over his new-found Messiah, and his genuine desire that others should share this joy with him? Dwight L. Moody declared that while "a man can be a good doctor and have no love for his patients, a skilful lawyer and have no love for his clients, or a prosperous merchant and have no love for his customers, no man can be a successful worker for God unless he has love for God and love for his fellow-men."

III Prejudice

What is Prejudice? Prejudice means simply this: "A judging before"; a forming an opinion before you have any grounds for an opinion; a judgment

before evidence; a making up your mind before you have come and seen. . . . Personal prejudice is the formation of an opinion of a person's character before we have the ground for an opinion. Here was Nathanael who heard Philip tell of Jesus. All he knew of Him was that He came from the town of Nazareth. At once he formed an opinion of Him: He could not be great or good and come from such a place. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The answer is wisdom itself: "Come and see the man whom you dislike. Get your evidence and then make your judgment."

I know some one thing about a man, some one act that he did when a boy, perhaps not even that; something about his parents or his relatives, something about his birthplace, or the school he went to, or his place of business, or his business partnerships. Now, it is almost impossible, as we are made, that such things should not influence us, that they should not give us some first impressions of what kind of man we shall find him when we come to know him; but to let such first impressions magnify and harden themselves into opinions, to let them influence our action, to let them decide us not to know the man whom we so rashly judge, this is personal prejudice. *Phillips Brooks.*

Prejudice is Senseless. A prominent lawyer in New Orleans who died recently was no less noted for his tolerance than for his legal knowledge. To a friend who once expressed wonder that this trait was so highly developed in him, he said:

"If I have a charitable temper, I owe it to a chance remark of an old uncle of mine when I was a boy. He saw me one day torturing a frog, and said, meditatively, 'Now I wonder why you do that? You are kind to dogs, birds and rabbits.' I replied that the frog was hideous, filthy and useless.

"'Yes, perhaps so,' he said, in the same reflective tone. 'It belongs to a different family from you. It has not the hereditary traits of the dog, the rabbit or the man. But it is not a trait of a frog to fight or despise another creature because it is not like itself. That is the mean, senseless vice of a man.'

"I thought over the remark a long time, trying to understand exactly what he meant by it. After that day I never threw a stone at a frog; and I learned to apply his meaning to the men and women around me."

The girl who at school thinks and talks from another point of view than yours is not to be despised or ridiculed or disliked. She has been placed by God in another family. So has the man of another religion or political creed, who crosses your path in after life, or the foreigner, or the woman whose skin is yellow or red or black, while yours is white. Each of them knows his own standing ground, his own blessings and temptations, his own duty to God and his fellows. To his own master he stands or falls. It is for you always to help, but never to judge him. *Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

It is not by searching thou canst find our God —— it is by following Him. *George Matheson.*

Reaching one person at a time is the best way of reaching all the world in time. *H. Clay Trumbull.*

What is searched for is to be got at, while that which is unregarded escapes. *Sophocles.*

The nearer the soul is to us, the greater the responsibility for it. *T. L. Cuyler.*

Library of Pacific Bible Seminary 1835 East Anaheim Street

The great problem is not how to save the world, but how to persuade each Christian that it is his business to be the means of saving some one man in the world. *C. H. Parkhurst.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. John 10. 27.

All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Heb. 4. 13.

He that is wise, winneth souls. Prov. 11. 30.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. John 9. 4.

They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Dan. 12. 3.

Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile. Psa. 32. 2.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

St. Bernard, a holy man of the Middle Ages, was wont often to ask himself this question. *"Bernarde, ad quid venisti?"*— Bernard, for what purpose are you here? What seek ye? asked Jesus. Can I answer this question satisfactorily?

Do I believe that my thoughts and purposes, like those of Nathanael when alone under the fig-tree, are known of God? What effect should this solemn thought have upon my life?

A Christian indeed in whom there is no guile. Could these words describe me?

He who would guide others to Christ must know the way himself.

"Go home and tell thy friends," said Christ to the demoniac whom he had restored to his right mind. Do I go and tell my friends the good news about the Great Physician? Is such personal work distasteful to me? Am I interested in or am I indifferent to the spiritual welfare of others? Do I not need to ask God to change me from a weakling fit only for the hospital, to a sturdy soldier ready and eager for active service in the Christian army?

We see in this lesson the different ways in which men of various temperaments are brought to Christ. Because my Christian experience does not agree with that of some others, I will not doubt its genuineness.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

John the Baptist was standing on the banks of the Jordan in Judea talking with two of his disciples. Looking up he saw the One who had no doubt been the subject of their conversation, the long-promised Messiah. Again as on the previous day the Baptist pointed Him out as the Lamb of God. The disciples, who had before hesitated to leave their teacher for another, now perceived in doing so they would only be fulfilling the Baptist's earnest wish, and they followed Jesus. "What seek ye?" said Jesus to them. Confused perhaps by the unexpected question, they answered by another, "Rabbi (Teacher), where abidest thou?" "Come and ye shall see," returned Jesus. One of the disciples was Andrew, and the other was John, whom Dr. George Matheson has aptly

called "The anonymous man," because he not only never gives his name, but never even thinks of his name. Writing long afterwards about this day John recalls the very hour when they entered the abode of Jesus, the tenth hour in Jewish reckoning, four o'clock in the afternoon in ours.

The disciples remained with Jesus that night, and left Him in the morning only to come back with others. John no doubt brought his brother James with him, but Andrew was the first to return with his brother Simon. "Thou art Simon," said Jesus to the new recruit, "but thou shalt be called Cephas." Cephas, or Peter, means a rock, as the Evangelist explains, for Jesus saw in impulsive Simon the rock-man, the future foundation of the Church.

The next day Jesus found Philip and bade him follow him; Philip in his joy at once sought Nathanael. "O Nathanael," he called out to him, "we have found Him of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." "Of Nazareth," returned Nathanael, "why, that wretched village is near Cana, my home; can any good thing come from Nazareth?" Philip could not stop to argue: "Come and see," he said, confident that Nathanael would then be as firmly convinced as he.

Jesus' greeting was a strange one. He needed not to give Nathanael a new name, for in him he perceived was no Jacob-element. "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile," were his words. "Whence knowest thou me?" exclaimed Nathanael in astonishment. "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God," reverently returned Philip. Then as Jesus had shown Nathanael that He had seen him under the fig-tree wrestling in prayer and longing for light even as Jacob wrestled of old, so He promised him that yet greater things he should see: the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, even as Jacob had seen the angels in his vision, descending and ascending upon the ladder of Heaven. By this Jesus meant that a stronger reason for Nathanael's faith will be the realization that He is the means of communication between Heaven and earth.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The witness of the Old Testament to Christ. Golden Text.
2. Methods of Evangelistic work.
3. Come and see. The Bible invites investigation.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Is anger ever justifiable? 2. What does Jesus' life teach in regard to this? 3. In what ways may the house of God be profaned in these days? 4. What does Luke tell us about Jesus' first passover in Jerusalem? (Luke 2. 41–52.) 5. At what time in Jesus' ministry did the event of the next lesson occur? 6. Where in the Synoptic Gospels is a similar cleansing recorded as the last public act? (Matt. 21. 12–13; Mark 11. 15–17; Luke 19. 45–46.) 7. What other instance does John record where men shrank in terror from Christ although He was defenseless? (John 18. 6.) 8. The figure of speech in verse 17, recalls what similar figure in the report of the spies about the land of Canaan? (Num. 13. 32.) 9. How did the Jews afterwards use Jesus' words in verse 19 against Him? (Matt. 26. 61; Mark 14. 58.) 10. On what other occasion did the Jews ask of Jesus "a sign?" (John 6. 30; Matt. 12. 38; 16. 1.)

LESSON IV — JANUARY 26

JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

John 2. 13–22. Commit vv. 13, 16.

Golden Text

Holiness becometh thine house,
O Lord, for ever. Psalm 93. 5.

LESSON TEXT John 2. 13–22 TIME April, A. D. 27

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:
15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;
16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.
17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.
18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?
19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.
20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?
21 But he spake of the temple of his body.
22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

13. *The Jews' passover.* R. V., *the passover of the Jews.* "The passover is called 'of the Jews' either for the sake of the Gentile readers, or because the Christian Easter was sometimes called Πασχα, Pascha, and John wished to distinguish it." *Dods.* The passover was one of the three great, annual festivals of the Jews. *Up to Jerusalem.* Capernaum was on the Sea of Galilee six hundred and eighty feet below sea level; Jerusalem was twenty-five hundred feet above sea level. The Synoptists give a cleansing of the temple at the last passover in Jesus' life, and John at this first passover of His public ministry. It is generally considered that there were two cleansings of the temple.

14. *And found.* R. V., *and he found. In the temple.* The word "temple" may refer to the sanctuary alone, or to the sanctuary together with its surrounding courts. Here the reference is to the Court of the Gentiles. *Oxen and sheep.* The sacrificial animals mentioned in Lev. 1. 2.

15. *When he had made.* R. V., *he made. Small cords.* R. V., *cords. He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen.* R. V., *and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen.* This change in the Revised Version shows that the "all" thus cast out by Jesus were the sacrificial animals,

"both the oxen and the sheep," and not their owners. *The changers.* Those who gave the Jewish coin in exchange for foreign coin.

16. *And said unto them that sold doves.* R. V., *and to them that sold doves he said. Take these things hence.* The doves could not be driven out since they were in baskets or cages. *My Father's house.* See Luke 2. 49. This was a clear claim of divine Sonship. *An house.* R. V., *a house.*

17. *His disciples remembered.* At the time, not as in verse 22. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* R. V., *Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.* Psa. 69. 9. "The reference in the original is to the grief with which the Messiah was prophetically declared to be consumed, through His zeal for the honor of the house of God. Here it refers not so much to grief, as to a holy indignation, which our Lord felt at the profanation of the temple. His indignation so burned as almost to consume Him. By a somewhat similar metaphor, we say of a man who is very much devoted to any pursuit, that he is eaten up with it." *Owen.*

18. *Then answered the Jews.* R. V., *the Jews therefore answered. The Jews.* The priest and rulers. 1. 19. *Answered.* Their words were an answer to Christ's act. *What sign. Sign* is John's usual word for miracle. They ask proof that He is divinely commissioned and therefore has the right to do what He has done.

19. *Destroy.* The Greek word λυσατε means primarily *loose.* "It indicates a destruction which comes from dissolution, from the breaking of that which binds the parts into a whole." *Westcott.* "The imperative is permissive." *Lange.* For the enigmatic answer compare Matt. 12. 38-40, where also Jesus predicts His resurrection. The play of words is upon *temple,* which the Jews naturally took to mean the inmost sanctuary, the shrine of God, and Jesus meant as His own body, the abode of the Incarnate Word, verse 21. For the way in which this saying was remembered and used against Jesus, see Matt. 26. 61 and Mark 14. 58.

20. *Then said the Jews.* R. V., *the Jews therefore said. Rear it up.* R. V., *raise it up.* It is the same Greek verb as in the preceding verse.

22. *That he had said this unto them.* R. V., *That he spake this. The Scripture.* "This word as used in the New Testament refers to the Old Testament writings. The reference must be to the tenor of prophecy which, under the teachings of the Holy Ghost, the apostles were enabled rightly to interpret, and apply to the great fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Such passages as Psa. 16. 10; Hos. 6. 2 may serve as illustrations." *Owen.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

13. *The passover of the Jews.* It is from St. John alone that we can deduce an outline of the chronology of our Lord's life and movements during His ministry. He marks the chief events by the recurrence of great feasts: the passover, at which he records our Lord's presence three times (2. 13; 11. 55; 12. 1); the feast of tabernacles (7. 2); the unnamed feast of 5. 1; and the winter feast of the dedication, 10. 22. The other Evangelists dwell mainly and most exclusively on the Galilean ministry, St. John, who knew more of Jerusalem than the others, and not improbably had a house or lodging there (18. 15), evidently wished to complete their record by detailing the main incidents of the ministry at Jerusalem. *F. W. Farrar.*

15. *He poured out the changers' money.* They were many, while He was

but one; they were wealthy and influential, while He was put a peasant. Yet there was in Him that which they never thought of resisting. They felt how awful goodness is. There is a majesty in virtue indignant before which the loftiest sinners cower. I have known a youth from the country enter an office in the city, where the daily conversation was so foul and profane that it would almost have disgraced the hulks; but a month after his arrival not a man in the place dared to utter an unchaste word if he was present. Yet he had scarcely spoken a syllable of reproof; it was simply the dignity of manly goodness that quelled conscious iniquity. *James Stalker, Imago Christi.*

16. *Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.* The world follows with breathless interest all the movements of that majestic Christ who goes heroically to the cross, and the impression is one of ineffable divine meekness. He does not murmur, He does not resent His fate, He does not seek to avoid it. But surely, if you read these same last scenes in the divine tragedy with care, these impressions of ineffable meekness are not the only impressions made upon the mind. He is strong as well as meek, and His power of moral resistance is quite unbroken. He reiterates His claim to be the Son of God in the presence of the high priest, and does so with an intensity and emphasis He had never used before. He is defiant both in the presence of Caiaphas and Pilate, refusing even to address the first, and addressing the second in a spirit of perfect fearlessness. Already in the garden He had exercised force; not indeed the force of the sword, but that nameless divine force which flowed forth from Him at will, and stopped the advance of the rabble as by the buffet of an invisible hand. And as you go back in the history of Jesus you find, and find continually, that you are in the presence not of a meek but a militant Christ. He can be angry, with an anger which is terrible to witness. He can speak words not only to the Pharisees, but to His own disciples which are terrible to hear — so bitter, so unsparing, so stern are they — words that dropped like blistering flame upon the heart and conscience.

Men were afraid of Him; even His own disciples followed Him at times with trembling awe, and they had need to fear. That He was gentle, very pitiful and loving, is most true; but it is also true that He was very terrible. Look at these things, weigh them well, and I think that behind the Christ of sentiment, the Christ of art, and hymns, and poetry — you will see the awful figure of another Christ slowly rising up — Christ as the strong man armed. *W. J. Dawson, The Reproach of Christ.*

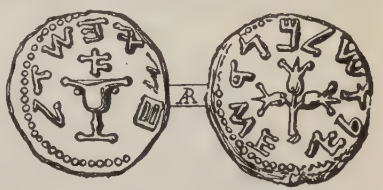
17. *Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.* This verse shows us what we too seldom realize in reading the New Testament, that the Jewish mind was filled to overflowing with thoughts of the Old Testament. The child was taught to say by heart large portions of the Law and Psalms and Prophets, and they formed the very texture of the mind, ready to pass into conscious thought whenever occasion suggested. With the exception of the 22d Psalm, no part of the Old Testament is so frequently referred to in the New as the Psalm from which these words are taken, the 69th. *H. W. Watkins.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *In the temple.* No building could be held in greater reverence than was the sanctuary itself. Said the rabbis: "The world is like unto an eye. The ocean surrounding the world is like the white of the eye; its black is the world

itself; the pupil is Jerusalem; but the image within the pupil is the sanctuary." The word *temple,* however, was applied to the whole enclosure, which included nearly a thousand square feet, and it was the outermost court into which Gentiles were allowed to enter, for whose sanctity the priests cared less, which had been made "a house of merchandise." Around this outer court four rows of pillars ran, magnificent, granite columns, roofed with cedar, and here the traders found shade. At first traders near the temple supplied the animals for sacrifice together with the salt, oil, wine, meal, and frankincense used for various offerings, and gradually, no doubt, they carried on their noisy wrangling nearer and nearer the temple precincts till at last they established themselves within the Court of the Gentiles itself. For the privilege it is thought that the priests received handsome revenues. Often exorbitant prices were asked for the sacrificial animals. Edersheim relates that Simeon (who was called the just) reduced the price of a pair of doves from a gold denarius, 15s. 3d., to half a silver one, equal to 4d.

14. *Changers of money.* To avoid profanation of the temple by money bearing idolatrous symbols or emblems of submission to an alien king, the temple tax must be paid in Jewish coin. From every one a half-shekel was required (Ex. 30. 13), and in Palestine itself for ordinary business this coin had been displaced by the Roman coins. The rate of exchange was very high, even ten or twelve per cent. "When it is remembered," says Dr. Edersheim, "that, besides strictly Palestinian silver and especially copper coin, Persian, Tyrian, Syrian, Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman money circulated in the country, it will be understood what work these money changers had. We can picture to ourselves the scene — the weighing of the coins, deductions for loss of weight, arguing, disputing, bargaining — and we can realize the terrible truthfulness of our Lord's charge that they had made the Father's house a mart and place of traffic."



Silver Half Shekel

15. *He made a scourge of cords.* Scattered about everywhere on the floor of the court were rushes used for litters, and for tying up the cattle. It may have been these rushes which Jesus twisted together for a whip.

20. *Forty and six years was this temple in building.* Solomon's temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the second temple built by Zerubbabel was rebuilt and enlarged by Herod the Great on a more magnificent scale, five hundred years later. So loth had the Jews been to see their temple torn down, and so suspicious of Herod's purpose, that he promised them not to tear down any part of the temple until the stones for the reconstruction were waiting on the spot. According to Josephus, Herod began this work in B. C. 20, and it was finished by Herod Agrippa II in A. D. 64. The Jews speak of it at this time as finished, though thirty-six years more elapsed before the entire temple area was completed.

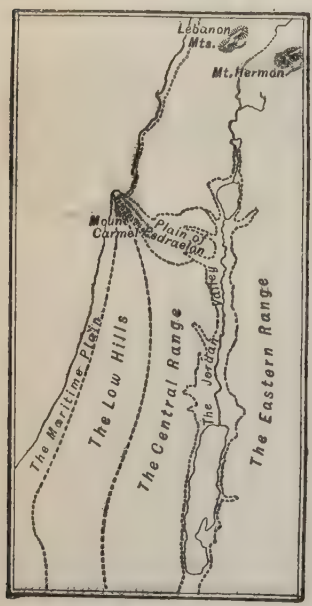
THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Mountain Ranges of Palestine. In Syria beyond the boundary of Palestine, there are two lofty parallel ranges of mountains separated by a narrow

valley, the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains. Their extensions southward are the Central Range and the Eastern Range of Palestine, the one on the west, and the other on the east, of the Jordan Valley.

The Plain of Esdraelon breaks through the Central Range in the latitude of Mount Carmel. In Upper Galilee the highest peaks of the Central Range are four thousand feet; in Lower Galilee the ranges run east and west about a thousand feet lower; at the Plain of Esdraelon they form a wall a thousand feet high. In Samaria they are isolated mountain peaks. In Judea the Central Range is a tableland two thousand four hundred feet high in the northern part.

Five Parallel Regions. In crossing Palestine eastward from the Sea, one crosses the low, level plain along the coast, ascends the low foot-hills, mounts to the summit of the Central Range, and then descends quickly to the Jordan Valley, far below the Mediterranean level, and after crossing the Jordan River climbs up again through a steep canyon to the heights of the Eastern Range. The diagram shows these five parallel regions: (1) the Maritime or Seacoast Plain; (2) the Low Hills; (3) the Central Range; (4) the Jordan Valley; and (5) the Eastern Range. See also the relief map.



The Physical Regions

Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, is situated on the highest part of the highlands of Judea two thousand six hundred feet above sea level. It is thirty miles from the Mediterranean Sea and eighteen miles from the Jordan. Ravines surround the city on all sides except on the north. East of the city the Valley of the Kidron separates it from the Mount of Olives; around the southern and western sides curves the Valley of Hinnom, and through the city itself runs the Tyropœan Valley. Jesus was presented in the temple at Jerusalem as an infant, and He made His first visit to it as a lad of twelve years of age. Our lesson records the first visit of His public ministry.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The prediction made to Nathanael received its first fulfillment in the first miracle of Jesus, one which showed alike His power and His kindly courtesy. With His newly-found disciples He had gone to Cana of Galilee, where His mother was, and all had been invited to a wedding feast. Perhaps more guests were present than the humble household had provided for; the supply of wine gave out, and Mary informed Jesus. She wished to aid her friends, but may we not also suppose that she wished her Son to make Himself famous by some brilliant display of His power? Jesus rebuked her thoughts by telling her that the time for His self-revelation had not yet come. Though she may not have understood fully His words, she had faith in His kindness and bade the servants do whatever He commanded. Jesus told them to fill the water-pots with

water and then draw it out and carry it to the one in charge of the feast, who found it to be wine of such superior quality that he hastened to tell the bridegroom that, contrary to the usual custom, he had kept the best wine till the last.

From Cana Jesus went to Capernaum for a few days and then to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the passover.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. How old was Jesus when His parents first took Him to Jerusalem? What festival did they attend there? Who will tell the story of how His mother lost and found Him? What were His words to her when she reproved Him? All His life Jesus was "about His father's business." At the beginning of His public life we hear of His attending another passover feast at Jerusalem, and finding that the people had profaned His "Father's house," as He called the temple. Some there may have been among those present at this scene who remembered hearing Him question and answer the learned rabbis eighteen years before. The lad of twelve, eager to learn about His Father's business, is now the man of thirty, zealous to maintain His Father's honor.

For Older Pupils. There is always danger that we may be blind to the enormity of abuses by reason of their very familiarity. Things have always been thus and so, custom has accepted them, who shall rise up against them? Long before the Reformation the flagrant abuse of the sale of indulgences had become manifest to many whose spirits were yet so deadened by custom or cowed by fear that they made no attempt to fight it. One there was, who thought not with Hamlet:

> "The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right;"

but boldly attacked Tetzel and the rest, and brought about the Reformation.

After the Roman Empire had become Christianized, the brutal gladiatorial games still continued. For centuries the citizens of Rome had been wont to delight in these bloody sights, and they maintained that the gladiators themselves wished them continued, preferring an early death to giving up their chance of winning immortal fame — greater fame even than prize fighters in our day secure — and in any event the enjoyment of the many was obtained only at the expense of the few. In 404 a great victory over the Goths was being celebrated. The gladiators had entered the arena and given their customary cry, *"Ave Cæsar, Morituri te salutamus"* (Farewell, Cæsar, we who are about to die salute thee), when a monk from the East, Telemachus by name, leaped down beside them. "The gladiators shall not fight: would you thank God by shedding innocent blood?" he cried out. Angry shouts rose from the thousands of spectators, and the monk was at once run through with swords by the prætor's orders. He gave his life, but his martyrdom opened the eyes of Honorius, and he issued an edict abolishing the games for ever.

The sacredness and quiet of the temple precincts at Jerusalem had been destroyed by the sale in the Court of the Gentiles of the animals needed for the sacrifice and the exchange of foreign and Jewish money. The Gentile proselytes were thereby given scant room and no peace for their worship, to be sure, the neighboring courts of the Jews were disturbed by the incessant

turmoil, the house of God was desecrated, but it was very convenient to get their half-shekel for the treasury and their lamb for the sacrifice right on the spot, and, besides, it had always been the custom, so far as they knew.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Holiness becometh Thy House, O Lord, for ever

How should One behave in Church? "These things write I unto thee, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the pillar of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," says Paul in his First Epistle to Timothy. And how ought men to behave in church? A man whose business had kept him in Africa for ten years was invited by friends on his return to New York to attend one of the large popular churches there. He replied that he would after two weeks, and when questioned as to the reason for this delay said that he had had no opportunity in Africa to attend church, and he wanted first to go to some smaller churches so as to learn how to behave himself.

The spirit in which you go to church largely determines the manner in which you worship there, and the help which you obtain from the service. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God," and on the way put out of your thoughts all the things which must occupy your minds so constantly during the week, for you are "drawing near unto God, your heavenly Father."

"Remember it is the house of God;
Be reverent, be silent, be thoughtful."

Visitors to Turkish mosques have told us that when they closed their eyes they could not tell that any one was in the building, so quiet were all the worshippers. There is little outward irreverence in the churches of our own land, but if we could read the thoughts of the worshippers, should we find them always reverent? "The Lord is in His holy temple, enter it with reverence. His house is a house of prayer; drive out worldly thoughts; hush your hearts into solemn attention."

You go to Church to worship God. Steadily and simply determine that you will worship Him, and that you will not let such trifles distract you as often do distract people from this purpose.

What if a door does creak? What if a dog does bark near by? What if the horses outside do neigh or stamp? You do not mean to confess that you, a child of God, are going to submit to dogs, or horses, or creaking doors!

If you will give yourself to the service with all your heart and soul, with all your might, as a boy does to his batting or to his catching at base-ball; if, when the congregation is at prayer, you determine that you will not be hindered in your prayer; or, when the time comes for singing, that you will not be hindered from joining in the singing with voice or with heart — why, you can do so. I never heard of a good fielder in base-ball losing because a dog barked, or a horse neighed, on the outside of the ball ground. *Edward Everett Hale.*

A Plea for Outward and Inward Reverence. I want everywhere in these days to utter a new plea, a plea for the reverence in outward worship that can only come from a deep, perpetual worship in the life. Gatherings for worship should ever have upon them the hush of the presence of God; not the solemn, dreadful awe in which we dare not speak, but the holy, quiet, subdued

reverence which is always the final and perfect expression of a great love. The external is not the most important; but it is important, and I believe with all my heart and soul that in proportion as we render God that worship that He seeks in the beauty of holiness, that the outward worship will be full of reverence, and no person coming to worship God will ever dream of coming late, and no person assembled for the worship of God will ever dream of going back as soon as the benediction is pronounced to the things that are paltry, and petty, and mean. There should be a solemn hush on our spirits, the hush, not of a dread, but of a great gladness; the hush, not of terror, but of a great and reverent love. May God teach us to worship. *G. Campbell Morgan,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

II Righteous Indignation

Divine Anger. Dr. George Matheson has shown the difference between an anger which is human and an anger which is divine, in these contrasted sentences: "Human anger resents the hurt; divine anger resents the wrong. Human anger is wounded in its pride; divine anger is wounded in its heart. Human anger laments the injury to self; divine anger laments the injury to God. Human anger cries out for revenge; divine anger cries out for atonement." In the temptation scene Christ's divine anger first shows itself as He resents the suggested wrong, and now in the cleansing of the temple we see His face glorified by divine indignation, His eyes aflame with righteous fire, and His voice charged with righteous scorn, as He attacks the abuse of His Father's house. Throughout His ministry, regardless of the consequences to Himself, He is consumed with zeal in resisting evil. It was His fearless interference in men's sins that brought Him to the cross.

How to mind One's Business.

Mark well this fact — not often urged, indeed —
That one's own business, if he mind it best,
Concerns the common welfare, takes due heed
How self, the unit, stands toward all the rest.

A lean and narrow virtue must it be,
Content with "meddle not!" — to go one's way.
A skulker, hemmed with selfish privacy.
Who lets one's brother suffer as he may.

To mind one's business, rather, as God minds —
That's the true way, the Christian way. God's Son
Full room within the common pathway finds
To walk His way, and yet walk not alone.

James Buckham, in *The Wayside Altar.*

When Wrong should be resisted. There are thousands of instances in which it is better to suffer wrong than to resent it. But in all cases where a man would, by his example, take out of the community a bold and manly spirit to resist injustice and wrong, and make men craven, he has no right to set that example. Where men seek to put wrong on you, and where their success will only make them stronger to oppress others that are weaker than you, you have no right to suffer wrong. No man has a right to hide from God's

battle, or to hold back his hand from the proper blow. The everlasting battle between right and wrong, between good and evil, between the spirit and the flesh, requires that every man should take sides, put on the whole armor of God, and stand in His place, and, if need be, fight to the end. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

Intolerable Tolerance. The word *tolerance* is sometimes very improperly applied to a kind of neutrality which is, in fact, only indifference. Let us carefully distinguish the spirit of Christian tolerance and justice from that weakness of will which makes us flee hostilities. Away with such a spirit. Let us never confound the peacemakers whom Christ calls the children of God, with those partisans of peace at any price, whom the Apocalypse repays in the words of vengeance: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The Christian remembers Christ to have said that He came to send on earth a sword. His equity is virile, militant. The peace which He would have us possess, is not the calm of the indolent but the conquest of the strong.

Cicero has defined the orator as an upright man who knows how to talk. We should like to make this definition of the Christian: "A just man who knows how to fight." In the world of to-day, the Christian would fill such a rôle as was filled by the knight in the dark hours of history, when the social order was tottering, and injustice was everywhere abroad. He is the man whom we need, sheathed in steel, but with a fraternal heart. *Charles Wagner, Justice.*

A Word to the Young People.

Seer nor sibyl can foretell,
On what lofty parallel,
You may do your lifework well —
Boys and girls,
Battling, in misrule's despite,
For the good, the true, the right,
'Gainst every form of lawless might,
Girls and boys.

Sarah T. Bolton.

III The Courage of Convictions

Whose Business was it? Everybody's business is nobody's business, is a common saying whose truth we see proved every day. Where there is one person who sees a wrong that should be righted and takes a step himself to accomplish it, there are a thousand who also see a wrong but wait for some one else to do something about it.

In a city street an over-worked cab horse fell and was unable to rise because of the weight of harness and shafts. The stupid driver looked on helplessly, and a large crowd quickly gathered and helped him do this. A man sauntered up, looked at the crowd contemptuously and exclaimed, "So there isn't a single one of you who will help the poor creature!" and sauntered on. Are not similar scenes enacted over and over again? There are always those who blame others for not doing what they themselves might do.

In another city street a heavily laden coal cart was at a standstill. The driver was swearing and beating the poor horses unmercifully, but they could not start the wagon on its uphill course to its near-by destination. A crowd

of people looked on. One of them said it was a downright shame, and left the scene. At last a little girl ran out and begged the man to stop, promising that she and the other children would get baskets and carry all the coal if he would only let the horses rest. The crowd laughed at her words, but were shamed into lending a hand themselves, and with one accord they pushed against the cart till the poor horses took heart and started easily up the grade.

Granville Sharp. A subordinate clerk in a publishing office without wealth or funds or scholarship, Granville Sharp, determined to overthrow the slave trade in Great Britain, to secure decisions in the courts against its rightfulness, and to influence natural legislation for its downfall. With every judge and lawyer in the kingdom opposed to him, he entered on the study of law, from its very rudiments, and, while toiling daily at his clerkship for bread, mastered the great principles of legal science, searched the records of judicial decisions and parliamentary enactments, and gathered the material he required for his great purpose.

Publishing the results of his investigations, and scattering his essays widely through the land, Sharp fought his test case to the highest tribunal of the realm, wrested from Lord Chief Justice Mansfield the admission of previous error, and secured the promulgation of the decision that freed every slave on the soil of England. The result of his personal endeavors aroused, for the completion of his mighty undertaking, Clarkson and Wilberforce and Buxton and Brougham; and the contest entered on single-handed was continued, with constantly fresh accessions of funds and favor, until slavery was abolished in all the British dominions, and then in America; and now every freedman on our purified soil owes his liberty, instrumentally, to the movement begun by Granville Sharp, the humble ordinance clerk, who heard the cry of God, "Be thou strong . . . and show thyself a man!" and in fearless independence rose up to battle and conquer the world. *H. Clay Trumbull, Shoes and Rations.*

Cowardice. The ignorance of the American citizen about the business affairs and the social conditions of his own municipality is often reprehensible, but his cowardice is far worse. That which he does know full well, he often will not declare. It will make him disagreeably prominent, perhaps; it will lead to discussions and controversies which it is pleasanter to avoid; it will bring down upon him the wrath of the classes who live by plunder; it will disturb some of his social relations; it may injure his business; therefore, he seals his lips and refuses to testify. How few men we find in any community who have the courage of their convictions upon questions that concern the public welfare — who are willing to speak out in criticism of that which is palpably wrong. The utterance of the truth that is in him, bravely, clearly, constantly, upon all questions of public duty, this is one of the primary obligations of every citizen of a republican state. To be ashamed or afraid to utter the truth that he believes is the gravest of delinquencies. *Washington Gladden, Ruling Ideas.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The kind of man who is useless in this world is the man who will not fight against wrongs, fight to make things better, fight to make his ideals come true. *Sunday School Times.*

No noble nature yet was ever irreverent. *F. W. Farrar.*

The purification of the temple is the perpetual charter of reformation. *Lange.*

Silence is sometimes golden, but in a Christian it is sometimes treason. *W. T. Ellis.*

The worship that is occasional should always be the expression of the worship that is perpetual. *G. Campbell Morgan.*

It is a sanctified imagination that invests the church building, whether it be a brick meeting house or a noble cathedral, with true sublimity; and love to God, whose house it is, can make the humblest material structure a home of the Spirit. *James Stalker.*

Meekness has its uses, but meekness may easily drift into mere cowardice, into connivance with evil, into complaisance toward wrong. *W. J. Dawson.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Jer. 7. 11.

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go unto the house of Jehovah. Psa. 122. 1.

Behold the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple, and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. Mal. 3. 1, 3.

Ye shall reverence my sanctuary: I am Jehovah. Lev. 19. 30.

Jehovah, I love the habitation of thy house,
And the place where thy glory dwelleth. Psa. 26. 8.

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Isa. 56. 7.

As for me, in the abundance of thy loving-kindness will I come into thy house; In thy fear will I worship. Psa. 5. 7.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Our heart is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and all its courts and chambers must be free of the profane traffic of evil. *George Reith.*

By carelessness of heart, worldliness of thought, or formality of service we may be irreverent in the house of God.

Am I guided in my actions by what others do rather than by what my conscience tells me I ought to do? Do I possess the courage of my convictions?

Keep me, Father, from indifference to the wrongs of others. Mindful ever that my business can not be independent of others' business, may I be guided by Thee in minding my business as Christ would mind it.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

From Cana Jesus with His mother and His disciples went to Capernaum, and from there to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the passover. From all parts of Palestine and from distant countries the Jews had come to this great national festival; two millions were quartered in the city or encamped in their white tents on the Mount of Olives and elsewhere around the city.

On the eve of the passover every householder had carefully cleansed his house from leaven and everything that would render it unclean according to the law, and when Jesus entered the temple He found it was His mission to cleanse His Father's house, as He called it, from the traffic which defiled it. Within the temple precincts, in the Court of the Gentiles, the animals needed for sacrifice

were being sold; and the din and confusion were further increased by the noisy wrangling at the tables of the greedy money-changers, who were making a goodly profit by taking foreign coin and other Palestinian coin in return for the silver half-shekel in which every one must pay his temple tax. This was no time for words; the irreverent custom so long established demanded force. Aflame with holy indignation, Jesus quickly gathered rushes from the floor and wove them into a whip with which He drove out the oxen and sheep while their owners fled. He ordered the owners of the doves to take them out, for they were in baskets, and closed the scene with the words that announced His claim to be the Son of God — "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

The rulers called Jesus to account; they could not object to the deed, but they demanded a sign or miracle proving His right to act thus authoritatively. Purposely Jesus answered them enigmatically. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." They made no effort to understand His meaning, but mockingly said, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"

The Evangelist explains that Jesus spoke not of the temple at Jerusalem, but of the temple of His body, and adds that after His resurrection the disciples remembered this saying of His and believed the word. At the passover many believed in Him because of His miracles, but Jesus did not value such faith and was not deceived by it.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Self-revelation of Christ as portrayed in John's Gospel.

2. Some abuses may be righted by appealing to the authorities; while other abuses demand the interference of individuals aflame with zeal for the right. Not to oppose injustice when one can, is to be oneself guilty of injustice.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Study the entire section, John 3. 1–21. 2. Commit to memory the prophecies in this lesson and in the next of Jesus' death. (2. 19; 3. 14.) 3. Did Nicodemus live to see the fulfilment of the prophecy in verse 14? (John 19. 39.) 4. The story of the brazen serpent, to which verse 14 refers, is one of last year's lessons; where is it found? (Num. 21. 4–9). 5. Look up the references given in the margin of the Revised Version to God's love for the world. (Referring to verse 16; before the words "loved the world" you will notice the letter q. At the bottom of the column, under q, the references are given.) 6. What do the words "eternal life" mean? (John 17. 3; Rom. 6. 23; 1 John 2. 23–25.) 7. With verse 19 compare John 1. 4; 8. 12; 9. 15; 12. 46. 8. Do you think that Nicodemus was convinced by Jesus' words? (John 7. 50, 51; 19. 39.)

LESSON V — FEBRUARY 2

JESUS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

John 3. 14–21. (Read John 3. 1–21.) Commit vv. 14–16.

Golden Text

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3. 16.

LESSON TEXT John 3. 14–21 TIME April, A. D. 27

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.
16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.
21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

14. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.* See Num. 21. 4–9. "Nicodemus must have understood that the healing power of the serpent of brass was in the fact that it led men to trust in Jehovah, who had appointed it. This was the current Jewish interpretation. Compare the Wisdom of Solomon, 'For he that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by Thee, that art the Saviour of all.'" *Watkins. Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.* On the cross. See John 8. 28; 12. 32. *Must.* Because it was the eternal purpose of God.

15. *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* R. V., *that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life. Eternal life.* Matt. 25. 46; John 17. 3. "Faith in Christ is looking to Him as given by God for our salvation from sin. Eternal life is simply the life in communion with the Eternal One." *Reith.*

16. This verse Luther calls the Little Gospel, the Bible in Miniature. Whether verses 16–21 were a part of Jesus' words to Nicodemus, or were John's comment upon His words in reference to the crucifixion and eternal life, is a question in dispute. In either case the teaching is that of Jesus. *So loved.* 1 John 4. 8. *The world.* 1 John 2. 2. *Gave his only-begotten Son.* The Jews would

naturally think of Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his only son. Gen. 22; Heb. 11. 17. *In him.* R. V., *on him. Everlasting.* R. V., *eternal.*

17. *God sent not.* "Note the frequent conception of the Father as Sender and the Son as Sent on this great mission, implying (1) pre-existence on the part of Jesus, another world in which He lived and out of which He came into this world; (2) a great divine plan." *Reith. His Son.* R. V., *the Son. Condemn.* R. V., *judge.* The Greek verb used here, κρινω, meant originally to separate, then to investigate, and hence to distinguish between good and bad, to judge. "If He judges there is but one verdict, Psa. 130. 3, hence judgment is condemnation." The Jews believed, moreover, that Christ's coming would bring about the destruction of the Gentile world, a belief that is here declared without foundation. *Through him might be saved.* R. V., *should be saved through him.*

18. *He that believeth on him is not condemned.* R. V., *judged.* "That is a fact of which the believer is conscious through the Holy Spirit. For him the divine judgment on sin is past, he sees it in the lifting up of the Son of man. His sin is judged there." *Reith. Is condemned already.* R. V., *hath been judged already.* The unbeliever's judgment is self-sentenced. *In the name.* R. V., *on the name.*

19. *This is the condemnation.* R. V., *judgment.* This (the remainder of the verse) is the way in which judgment is brought about. *Light is come.* R. V., *the light is come.* See John 1. 4, 5, 9. *Darkness.* R. V., *the darkness. Because.* R. V., *for.* "The apparent contradiction, that Jesus has not come to judge, and yet with His coming accomplishes judgment, the Evangelist now explains. Jesus has come into the world in truth only as the Light, and it now lies with men, if instead of light they love darkness (Matt. 6. 23) because their works are evil (1 John 3. 12)." *Weiss.*

20. *That doeth evil.* The verb is the present participle in Greek, showing that the doing does not refer to a single act. This thought is expressed in the margin of the R. V. by the translation "practiseth." *Neither cometh.* R. V., *and cometh not. Lest his deeds should be reproved.* R. V., *works.* See Eph. 5. 13. The character of their works determines their relationship to Christ.

21. *He that doeth truth.* R. V., *he that doeth the truth.* This is an expressive phrase peculiar to John. "To do the truth is at any rate to live up to what one knows; to live an honest, conscientious life." *Dods. Deeds.* R. V., *works. Are wrought.* R. V., *have been wrought.* His works are good, and God is the source of all good; the light reveals that he has been working in fellowship with God.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

14–21. Into a score of brief verses are condensed the core truths out of which have sprouted whole forests of discourses and commentaries. The great, central truths of Christianity — human guilt, the atonement by Christ, regeneration by the Spirit, the doctrine of the Trinity, God's love in redemption, the need and the nature of faith, and the promise of Heaven — are all packed into this one short, simple, solemn talk. *T. L. Cuyler.*

14. *Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.* Holman Hunt paints Jesus in the carpenter shop: the day's work is over; the spent toiler lifts His arms in an attitude of utter weariness, and the level rays of the setting sun cast upon the wall yonder the shadow of a cross. The suggestion is true: He was born

Library of Pacific Bible Seminary 4835 East Anaheim Street Long Beach, California

under that shadow and lived under it. He knew that He had come to die. He knew that, inasmuch as the penalty had been passed upon the race, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," there could be no deliverance but by death. *David James Burrell, The Wondrous Cross.*

21. *He that doeth the truth cometh to the light.* I sometimes ask the children in the Sunday-school who is the happiest man in the Bible. They know who is the strongest, the meekest, the oldest. Can there be any question that the beloved disciple, who knew more of the heart of Christ than any one else, who reclined at the Last Supper on the bosom of his Lord, was the most favored, the happiest man that ever breathed? And yet he said: "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." (3 John 5. 4). *Albert H. Plumb.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Came to Jesus by night.* This conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus was held at night, and many think that Nicodemus came at this time because he was too cowardly to come openly in the daytime. Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie, writing in the *Sunday School Times,* says: "I do not think this was the reason, because John does not add, 'for fear of the Jews,' as in John 20. 19 and 9. 22. A woman who has not read commentaries told me that Nicodemus came by night because he was busy during the day, and he did not think that Jesus could be found at home except at night." That Orientals spend their evenings at one another's houses pleasantly discussing important matters over cups of coffee till late at night is a matter of observation.

16. *Loved the world.* Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and the Pharisees believed that God loved only the Jews, His chosen people.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In our lessons thus far we have followed Jesus in His journeys from His home in Nazareth to Judea, and, after His baptism at Bethabara and temptation in the wilderness, to Bethany beyond the Jordan and thence (probably by way of Bethsaida, where He bade Philip follow Him) back to Galilee, where He attended the wedding feast at Cana and turned the water into wine. From Cana He went to Capernaum, and then to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the passover. His first public act there was the cleansing of the temple. The interview with Nicodemus followed. John probably had a home in Jerusalem, and it may be that in his upper-chamber Nicodemus found Jesus.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, came to Jesus at night for a confidential talk. He acknowledged the great impression that Jesus' words had made upon him, and he wished to know more about his place in the kingdom of God. Jesus told him who are the members of that spiritual kingdom; they are not the Jews merely because they are Jews, but they are all those who have been "born again," who have received a new spiritual nature through the agency of the Spirit of God Himself. The Spirit can not be seen any more than the wind can be seen; only in the changed nature of the man,

his conduct and motives, can the influence upon him of the Spirit be recognized. The Revealer of divine things is the Son of God.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Where was Jesus in our last Sunday's lesson? What great festival was being celebrated? What scene in the temple aroused His righteous anger? What was wrong in this custom? What did Jesus do? What did the chief Jews say to Him? What was the answer of Jesus and what did He mean by it? How did the Jews receive His answer?

After cleansing the temple Jesus spent the remainder of the day among the crowds gathered in the great city, and wrought many miracles of healing. When night came He went to the home of some friend, perhaps to that of John, the writer of the Gospel which we are studying. Long after nightfall Jesus was sitting in the guest chamber on the roof; His room was lighted by an earthen vessel filled with olive oil in which a wick floated; the street was dark, for you know we must not think of the streets of Jerusalem as ablaze with electric lights as ours are; there were not even any street lamps to light the narrow thoroughfares. A man was walking rapidly toward the house where Jesus was. It may be that he had thrown a corner of his mantle over his face so as not to be recognized in the moonlight by the Roman sentinels or the Jews of his acquaintance, for he was an important man in the city, one of its chief rulers, and he may not have wished it known that he was going to visit Jesus, the humble Nazarene who had already aroused the anger of the chief Jews. Or it may be that Nicodemus, for so this man was called, was not at all ashamed of being seen on this errand, and only came at night because it was the custom among the lawyers to discuss great questions in the cool and quiet night, or because, after seeing and hearing about the wonderful events of the day, he could not wait longer to learn more from the Great Teacher. Nicodemus climbed the outside stairway which led to the chamber on the roof, and greeted Jesus. Long they talked together, and the learned lawyer was amazed at what Jesus told him.

An Upper Chamber

For Older Pupils. From the noise and turmoil of the traffic in the temple and Jesus' authoritative act, our Evangelist takes us to a quiet room where Jesus declares great spiritual truths to a learned and earnest seeker after

the truth. Characteristic of John's Gospel are the dialogues of Jesus, His revelation of great spiritual truths to one hearer. See the Introduction of this book.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I God so loved the World, that He gave His Only Begotten Son

A Wonderful Verse. This sixteenth verse of the third chapter of John is held to be the best loved of all the verses in the Bible. "To every one it is something; to some it is everything."

Very familiar is the story of the little girl who found on a piece of paper these words, "For God so loved the world that He gave." The rest of the verse was torn off, but when she was asked the reason for her happy looks she produced the paper and added, "I don't know what God gave, but if He loved the world so much that He gave anything, it must make us all happy."

"Hast thou sinned?
There is a Sacrifice. Lift up thy head;
The lowly world, and the over-world alike,
Ring with a song, a happy rede,
'Thy Father loves thee,'"

sings Jean Ingelow.

"After seeing how father has planned for us all, if we do not carry out his purposes, we are unworthy to live," announced a young man with determination after hearing his father's will read. After hearing our heavenly Father's will for us in this wonderful verse, if we do not carry out His purpose for us and accept the great sacrifice so fully offered, are we not unworthy to live either here or hereafter?

It was just like Him. In oriental lands where kings are cruel tyrants God is thought of as only another and greater tyrant, cruel and pitiless, to be appeased by human tortures, to be delighted by the passing of little children through the fire. The revelation of the true nature of God had been made gradually to His chosen people in Palestine, but before the coming of Christ they had not realized that He is a God of infinite love and tender mercy. It was Christ who taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." It was Christ's teaching that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." To an aged colored woman some one said, "Isn't it wonderful that God should give His only Son to die for us?" "No," came her happy answer, "it is just like Him." God is not a mighty king ruling His subjects with rod of iron and unmindful of their needs, but He is love itself, and the giving of His only Son to suffer and die for the sins of the world was "just like Him," for as His love is infinite, so is His capacity for sacrifice.

The figure 8 represents only eight units, but when it is given a new position in algebra (∞) it represents infinity. The word *love* as applied to our affection for God represents so little to us that we fail to realize its infinitude of meaning when viewed in its other relation of God's love to us.

We love, because He first loved us. It is with these beautiful words that the Apostle John in his first Epistle expressed the true conception of the origin of the love we feel for God, and the love we feel for Christ is closely linked with the other in its origin and in its nature. That "God is love" is the fundamental truth of the relation which exists between God and the uni-

verse. Creation is itself an expression of the love of God, and man was made out of God's love in order that he might be the recipient of that love. The love therefore which we feel for Him and for Christ as the incarnate God is a reciprocal love. It is inevitable as soon as one recognizes the meaning of life and the relation in which he stands to his Creator and Father. It was one aspect of the life and work of Jesus to bring men to realize that the world exists in and by love, and that the perfect realization of love in all ways will bring the accomplishment of God's great purpose for the universe. So that no man has attained a complete maturity until he has made his own character and his own service a complete expression of the love which God made the foundation of His creation. We can not isolate ourselves from Him any more than we can isolate ourselves from our fellow-men. We must find that true relation which will co-ordinate our lives with the world and with God. *The Biblical World.*

II That whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have Eternal Life

The Great Mystery of the Atonement. That which human wisdom cannot plan must necessarily be beyond its power perfectly to understand. Human intelligence is capable of appreciating anything that lies within the range of the working of human wisdom. The intelligence of one man may not be equal to the discovery of the method of transmitting words by electricity without use of wires. When, however, another human intelligence has thought the matter out, this man is able to comprehend the explanation given. It may therefore be argued that while man is not equal in his own wisdom to devising a plan of redemption, he ought to be able perfectly to comprehend the plan of God. Yet this does not follow. In the first case, the whole movement is within the compass of human intelligence. In the second, all human wisdom has been utterly exhausted in its attempts to think of, or to discover a method of salvation, and has failed. The person of Christ, and the whole scheme of human redemption, are so transcendently marvelous as to demand for their explanation the recognition of their Divine origin. The subject is therefore to be approached with holy and submissive reverence. *G. Campbell Morgan.*

No Life can recover Itself from Sin. In the recent dramatization of General Lew Wallace's *Prince of India,* the most dramatic moment of all is when upon the ruined walls of Constantinople at night, the wandering Jew appears alone, and as he sits there in the darkness, realizing that the passions of men have thwarted the atonement he has sought to make, there appears in the eastern sky a golden cross; but failing to understand its deep significance, he sees in it only the signal that he has failed, and he totters from the stage to another hundred years of wandering, crying "I must atone! I must atone!" *The Homiletic Review.*

Just what to do. "What must I do to be saved?" You are right in emphasizing that little word "do," for your Saviour having already done His mighty work of providing an atonement for you, the next doing must be on your side. If anybody tells you to do nothing at all, but simply trust yourself to Christ, he may only confuse you. Jesus Himself never gave any such advice. He said, "Follow Me," and that means, go where I lead you,

and do what I tell you. In Peter's case that meant the quitting of his nets and his fishing boats, and in Matthew's case it meant the leaving of his toll-booth; and in both cases they did it to please the Lord Jesus. No waiting for more feeling, you observe; no bargaining with Him for an easy time or any reward. They obeyed Christ. That was their decisive step.

Now, in the very first thing that offers itself to you, so act as to please your Saviour. Consult conscience. Jesus speaks to you through the conscience; it is your moral telephone; listen and obey.

Salvation is a joint process: it is all free grace on the side of the atoning Saviour; it is all free obedience on our side. Jesus works, and you must work — He in you, and you for Him. Doing nothing at all is the damning sin. Just observe what answers Peter and Paul gave to the question, "What must we do to be saved?" Peter's prompt, pithy answer at the time of Pentecost was, "Repent!" Repentance is more than shame or sorrow for sin; it is a turning from sin with a full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience to Christ. This means doing, not mere feeling.

Paul's answer to the question was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." This was also an act, and a very impressive one. Trusting in the jailer's case was not a babe falling asleep on the bosom of a mother — as some people define faith. It was a resolute step, into which he put the whole energy of his soul — as I would put all my bodily energies into grasping a rope if I fell overboard from a ferry-boat. His was the quick cleaving to Jesus; God was working in him, and he in turn was "working out his salvation with fear and trembling." My friend, your faith must be a laying hold on Jesus Christ and a cleaving fast to Him. That is your doing. He will cleanse you, strengthen you, and hold you to the end. That is His doing. *Theodore L. Cuyler,* in *Zion's Herald.*

III The Worth of the Individual

Jesus' Conversations with Individuals. Do you realize that Jesus never saved His great truths to tell them to a multitude, but uttered them to instruct or comfort individual souls? It was in His private interviews with Nicodemus, with the woman of Samaria, with the sisters at Bethany, and with the disciples that He sowed the seeds of righteousness which have borne such wonderful fruit. His miracles of feeding the five thousand and the four thousand were the only ones wrought for the benefit of many. His compassion was rather shown to individuals, the blind man, the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, the lepers. And what interest He always showed in persons, how keenly He read their thoughts, how clearly He saw their needs, and how freely and gladly He ministered to these needs! "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." These words of Jesus are for us to-day. He always reveals to us the Father's ways. We are always in danger of having a vague, impersonal conception of God, or of regarding Him with so much reverence that we do not think of Him as caring for or having much to do with our own individual lives.

The right thought is that of our poet Oliver Wendell Holmes: —

"Lord of all being, throned afar
Thy glory flames from sun and star;

Center and soul of ev'ry sphere
Yet to each loving heart how near."

What a comfort to be able to say with Hawthorne that "Just as there comes a warm sunbeam into every cottage window, so comes the love beam of God's care and pity for every separate need."

The Architect's Lesson. George was an architect. He had just designed a large and beautiful dwelling, and he laid the sketch before his brother, who admired the stately front and delicate, refined decorations. "It is fit for a prince to live in!" he said. "What delight it must be to form a conception of such a beautiful building, and then make it real!"

George's assistants were busy with drawing up the specifications for the house, to be given to the builders. They appealed to him at every point.

"Of what size shall this waste-pipe be, sir?" queried one.

"What will be the dimensions of the pantry sink, sir?" said another.

"Of what wood shall the dado in the dining-room be?" asked a third.

An hour later, when the brothers were alone, John said: "Do you look after all the petty details of the building, George? I supposed the grand plan was yours, but that you personally entrusted the minor details to subordinates."

"And yet the strength and beauty of the whole building depend on my attention to the details," George said. "Until the house is finished I oversee everything. That which seems to us to be one of the most petty may be one of the most important parts of the building." He was silent for a moment and then said earnestly:

"Do you not think, John, that the great Architect who plans a human life knows and cares for each incident in it, however small? Why not carry your little needs as well as your great troubles to Him? His wisdom planned the foot of a fly as well as the courses of the sun. I can not believe that He will fail you, no matter how petty the anxiety for which you ask His help."

As John went back to his home that day, he had a new view of the fatherhood of God, and felt in his heart a great security and peace. He would carry all his troubles, small and great, to the one Helper, and leave them there. Had he not been bidden to receive the kingdom of Heaven as a little child? And would not a child carry all its pains and longings and hopes to its Father? *The Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Live on confidential terms with God. *Samuel L. Brengle.*

Saving faith is the affectionate choice of Jesus Christ as both Saviour and Lord. *Joseph Cook.*

A loveless worm, within its clod,
Were diviner than a loveless God. *Browning.*

If the only begotten Son were not equal to the Father, the gift would be less than the measure of divine love. *George Reith.*

God's love is not rounded out until I respond to it. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

O Lord, I can not plead my love of Thee;
I plead Thy love of me;—
The shallow conduit hails the unfathomed sea. *Christina Rossetti.*

Christ must become Man in order to suffer, and He must continue to be God in order that He may suffer enough for all. *Anselm.*

In creation God shows us His hand, but in redemption God gives us His heart. *Adolph Monod.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. John 12. 32.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4. 10.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1 John 4. 8.

In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved. Acts 4. 12.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1 Tim. 1. 15.

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. 2 Cor. 9. 15.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

The "whosoever" of verse 16 is world-wide in its inclusiveness, but it does not include me unless I share in the belief in the crucified Saviour.

The presentation of Christ to men now divides them into two classes, those who seek Him as the Light and those who prefer the darkness. In which class do I belong?

Belief in Jesus is not merely an assent of the intellect to the truth that He is the Christ; it is an assent of the will which shows itself in a decisive bearing on the character. The reality of entrance into the spiritual, eternal life is shown in the daily human life. What evidence does my life give? Are my deeds such that they can not bear the searching revelation of the Light? Am I "doing the truth" in that I live conscientiously up to the light I have?

Christ is the revelation of God's love. Christ came not to save Himself but to save the world. Love to God and unselfish love that shows itself in service to others — are not these demanded of those who accept God's great gift?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The miracles which Jesus wrought on His first visit to Jerusalem convinced many that He was a messenger from God; among them was Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night humbly desirous of learning more about the Great Teacher who had so impressed him, and Jesus talked with him about the kingdom of God which John the Baptist had declared to be at hand, and about those who could be its citizens. Among other things Jesus told him that the king of this spiritual kingdom, the Son of Man, would indeed be lifted up, not on a throne, like Herod's, as the Jews expected, but in the way that the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness by Moses. As the Israelite poisoned by serpents might look with faith at the elevated serpent and receive physical health, so every one poisoned by sin might look with faith at the crucified Christ and receive spiritual health, even entrance into eternal life.

This provision had been made for the salvation of men because of God's great

love, a love world-wide, a love whose depth is measured by the gift of His only begotten Son. The wondrous words which tell us this are these: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." God's purpose in sending His Son into the world was to save, not to judge it. He who believes in Him is not judged because his sin was judged and pardoned on the cross; he who believes not brings judgment upon himself by his unbelief. Judgment is indeed brought about by Christ's coming into the world as the Light, however, for there are those who deliberately choose the darkness instead of the light. Men whose works are evil do not wish them brought into the revealing light from God for condemnation, but men whose works are good seek the light, for since God is the source of all good, He is thereby glorified.

The night wore on and Nicodemus parted from Jesus — in what spirit we are not told, but after-glimpses of his life show him as one "that doeth the truth and cometh to the light."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The danger of a careless use of theological terms. "The human mind is accustomed to play tricks with itself in every form," says Gladstone, "and one of the forms in which it most frequently resorts to this operation is when it attenuates the labor of thought, and evades the responsibility of definite decision, by the adoption of a general word that we purposely keep undefined to our own consciousness. So men admire the British constitution, without knowing or inquiring what it is, and profess Christianity but decline to say or think what it means."
2. The Atonement.
3. The nature of faith.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What information does 2 Kings 17. 22–33 give in regard to the inhabitants of Samaria? 2. Read the 4th chapter of Ezra, which describes the beginning of the enmity between the Samaritans and the Jews. 3. What did the Jews call Jesus in John 8. 48? 4. On what two occasions did Jesus hold up a Samaritan as an example to be followed? (Luke 10. 25–37; and 17. 11–19.) 5. Give the first part of Christ's conversation with the woman of Samaria. (John 4. 1–18.) 6. What led the woman of Samaria to acknowledge Jesus as a prophet? (John 4. 16–18, 29.) 7. What mountain overhung Sychar? (Gerizim.) 8. Look up these texts referring to the religious supremacy of the Jews: Rom. 3. 2; 9. 4, 5; Isa. 2. 3; Micah 4. 2. 9. What promises were made to Abraham that salvation should be from the Jews? (Gen. 12. 3; 18. 18; 22. 18, etc.) 10. What is the meaning of verse 21?

LESSON VI — FEBRUARY 9

JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

John 4. 19–29. (Read John 4. 1–42.) Commit vv. 23, 24.

Golden Text

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. John. 7. 37.

LESSON TEXT John 4. 19–29 TIME December, A. D. 27

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.
20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.
21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.
23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.
24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.
25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.
26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.
27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or Why talkest thou with her?
28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

19. *Thou art a prophet.* A prophet was one whose words were inspired by supernatural knowledge. She acknowledges that Jesus, who was a stranger and a Jew, possessed a marvelous knowledge of her history. See verses 16–18 and 29.

20. *This mountain.* Gerizim, to which she doubtless pointed as she spoke.

21. *The hour cometh.* The old order changeth. *When ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father.* R. V., *when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.* That is, worship shall be offered in neither place alone, but in all places.

22. *Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship.* R. V., *Ye worship that which ye know not; we worship that which we know.* Jesus uses the pronoun "We," identifying Himself with the Jews, as the woman had included Him with them in the pronoun "ye" of verse 20. Of the Old Testament writings the Samaritans accepted the Pentateuch only; their knowledge of the nature of God was ignorance compared with that of the Jews to whom God had been revealed through His dealings with them in their later

history as told in the prophetic and other writings of the Old Testament. *Salvation.* The salvation promised the fathers and fulfilled in Christ. *Is of the Jews.* R. V., *is from the Jews.* Christ must be a Jew, for the Jews alone were prepared for a Saviour through God's fuller revelation to them.

23. "The question concerning the where of worship (21) could be resolved only by the what (22) and this again by the how (23)." *Lange. The hour now is.* Christ had already won a few true worshippers. *In spirit and in truth.* R. V., *in spirit and truth.* True worship is in harmony with the true nature of God, it is the communion of man's spirit with God's Spirit. Compare "Whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son," Rom. 1.9. *For the Father seeketh such to worship him.* R. V., *for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.*

24. *God is a Spirit.* R. V., margin, *God is spirit.* Compare God is light, 1 John 1.5; God is love, 1 John 4.8. *Worship him in spirit and in truth.* R. V., *worship in spirit and truth.*

25. *Messias.* R. V., *Messiah.* Messias is the Greek form of the Hebrew Messiah; the woman probably used the latter Jewish word. *Which is called Christ.* R. V., *he that is called Christ.* The phrase is put in parentheses in the Revised Version to indicate that it is an explanation added by the writer of the Gospel. *Tell.* R. V., *declare.*

26. *I am he.* Compare Matt. 16.20; 17.9; Mark 8.30. Christ could freely declare to this Samaritan woman what He would not to the Jews because they would seek to make Him King. (John 6.15.)

27. *And marvelled that he talked with the woman.* R. V., *and they marvelled that he was speaking with a woman. Yet no man said.* Because of their reverence for their Master and their knowledge that His ways were not their ways. *Talkest.* R. V., *speakest.*

28. *The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way.* R. V., *so the woman left her waterpot and went away.* The effect produced by Christ's words is shown in her utter forgetfulness of her errand at the well. *Into the city.* Sychar. *To the men.* R. V., *to the people.*

29. *Which.* R. V., *who. Told me all things that ever I did.* An exaggeration natural to an excited woman. "To her awakened conscience it seemed as though He had told everything," is Vincent's interpretation. *Is not this the Christ?* R. V., *Can this be the Christ?* See verse 42.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

20. *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.* Now it came to pass that the Alexandrian Jews and Samaritans disputed about their temples before Ptolemy himself, the Jews saying that, according to the law of Moses, the temple was to be built at Jerusalem; and the Samaritans saying that it was to be built at Gerizim. They desired therefore the king to sit with his friends and hear the debates about these matters, and punish those with death who were baffled. . . . Now when Sabbeus and Theodosius (Samaritans) had given leave to Andronicus (from Jerusalem) to speak first, he began to demonstrate out of the law, and out of the successions of high priests, how they every one in succession from the father had received that dignity, and ruled over the temple; and how all the kings of Asia had honored that temple with their donations,

and with the most splendid gifts dedicated thereto: but as for that at Gerizim, he made no account of it, and regarded it as if it had never had a being. By this speech, and other arguments, Andronicus persuaded the king to determine that the temple at Jerusalem was built according to the laws of Moses, and to put Sabbeus and Theodosius to death. *Josephus, Antiquities.*

21. *Jesus saith unto her.* Our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus and with the woman of Samaria are meant to be laid side by side, both presenting the divine fulness out of which all, however unlike, must receive grace for grace. The contrasts are remarkable. We have the difference in character and position of Nicodemus and this woman, the difference in Christ's way of dealing with them: to the former, shutting the kingdom, to the latter opening it, making the one feel that no personal merit gave a right to the kingdom, and making the other feel that the greatest personal demerit need not exclude. We see how some seek Christ, how some are sought, how Christ draws every type of character, and can set forth His truth so as to gain each — the respectable Pharisee and the depraved woman; how all who enter the kingdom are made to perceive that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." *George Reith.*

23. *True worshippers.* Jesus would teach that men are all alike dear to God. At His coming it was a thought that had never entered the mind of either Jew or Greek or Roman. The Jew was the favorite of Heaven, the rest of the world were hopeless heathen; the Greek was the cultured philosopher, the rest of the world were barbarians; the Roman was the conqueror of the world, everybody else was an inferior creature, incapable of sharing his privileges or dignity. How shall all this be swept away? Shall He lift up His voice against it in oration, sermon, discourse, controversy? Shall He smite and break, that He may force upon the reluctant world the truths of brotherhood? Nay, He will Himself become the Brother Man. He will sit at meat with publicans and sinners. He will make as much of a publican as of a Pharisee, and welcome a sinner as gladly as a scribe. He will go home to dinner with Zaccheus, and talk with a Samaritan woman at the well, and stay to heal a poor heathen woman's daughter. *Mark Guy Pearse.*

24. *God is a Spirit.* Very slowly do we learn that God is a Spirit. We think nothing is more surely believed among us. Alas! Make almost any application of this radical truth, and we find how little it is believed. Take, for example, the appearances and voices by which intimations were made to godly men in Old Testament times. Why are many people reluctant to allow that these manifestations were inward and to conscience, that they came as convictions wrought by an unseen Power, rather than as outward appearances or audible voices? Is it not because the truth that God is a Spirit is not adequately apprehended? Or why again do we so crave for signs, for clearer demonstrations of God's Being and of His Presence? Ought we not to be satisfied if He responds to spiritual aspirations, and we find that our craving for holiness is met and gratified? *Marcus Dods, Expositor's Bible.*

29. *Can this be the Christ?* It appears from Josephus that in the later years of the procuratorship of Pilate, there was an actual rising of the Samaritans, who assembled on Mount Gerizim, under the influence of these Messianic expectations. Who can say that they may not have been originally set in motion by the event recorded in the Fourth Gospel? *William Sanday.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

20. *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.* Some two hundred Samaritans are now living at Nablus, the ancient Shechem. The temple built on Gerizim was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in the second century B. C., but the Samaritans have continued to worship on its site, and here they annually celebrate the Passover. They claim that Mount Gerizim was the scene of the intended sacrifice of Isaac. In their copy of the Pentateuch, where it says that "God will choose a spot" (Deut. 12. 14; 18. 6, and elsewhere), they read "God has chosen a spot," that is, Gerizim, and the tenth commandment both in Exodus and Deuteronomy is followed in their copy by a command to erect an altar on Mount Gerizim.

20. *Ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.* The Jewish idea of the Church of the future we are not ignorant of. They believed that all other nations should literally bow themselves down and become disciples of the Jews, and be received by adoption into the Jewish church, so that in the end all the people on the globe should be members of the Jewish economy; and they believed that the temple in Jerusalem would be to all races of men in the world what it was to them. They believed that pilgrimages would always be made to Jerusalem and that the temple-worship would remain to the end of time. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

25. *Messiah cometh.* The Samaritans expected a Saviour whom they called "The Returner," or "The Converter." They based their expectations upon Deuteronomy 18 and other allusions in the Pentateuch. Samaritans of the present day look for one whom they call the "Mahdi."

26. *Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.* No braver defender of woman ever appeared than Christ our Lord. How tenderly He treated her! How He exerted His power to heal her! With what respect He addressed her! How He lifted her to companionship, friendship, discipleship!

Out of this great revolution has come woman's present elevated position. You, however, can not appreciate the magnitude of this revolution unless you recall the condition of the world and the obstacles with which the Saviour had to contend at that time. At that very time and in the Jewish nation itself woman was a thing. Polygamy was universal under the head of successive divorce, and woman was degraded. Rome swayed her mighty scepter over the fairest portions of the world, but under its splendid civilization woman was not esteemed an individual; her individuality was not recognized. No voice had she in the government of the family; the father was the sole authority. He claimed the children. He had supreme control over her property; by marriage she lost all family rights, and could bequeath nothing. She married a master who had power over her life. At her trial he was the presiding judge. Such was Roman jurisprudence touching woman, and yet Christ in the very presence of the Roman proconsul of Palestine, the representative of the Cæsars, dared to inaugurate this great revolution. *John Philip Newman, Conversations.*

27. *They marvelled that he was speaking with a woman.* It was thought beneath the dignity of a rabbi to talk with a woman about questions of law. "Rather burn the sayings of the law than teach them to women," was the rabbinical advice. One of the six things which a rabbi might not do was

to "converse with a woman on the street, even his own wife." "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast not made me a woman," was an exclamation often heard.

28. *The woman left her waterpot.* Drawing water in the East is woman's work. Regularly the women and girls go to the fountain or wells which are often a long way from the town or village. Even now the people of Palestine call the early evening "The time when women go out to draw water." The water is brought in earthenware jars carried on the head, or in water-skins slung on the back by a band passing around the forehead.

Going and Returning from the Fountain in Palestine To-day

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

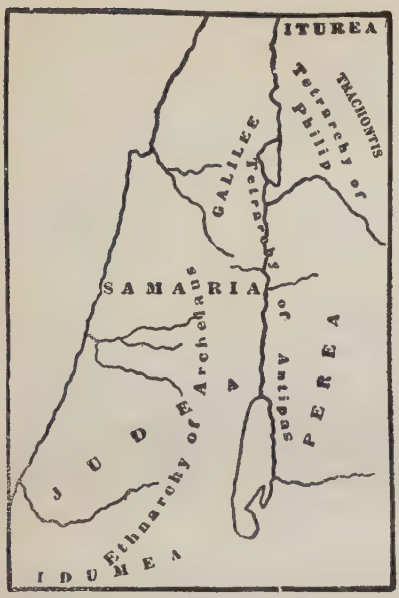
Political Divisions. When Jesus was born, Herod the Great, who had ruled all Palestine under the Romans, was drawing near the close of his long reign. He died a few months later, and his kingdom was divided among his sons. See the diagram on the opposite page.

Archilaus received Idumea, Judea, and Samaria, west of the Dead Sea and the Lower Jordan, and was given the title of ethnarch. He was deposed by Rome in A. D. 6, and his territory was made an imperial province ruled by procurators appointed from among the Roman knights. But little is known about these procurators till Pontius Pilate, the fifth procurator, was appointed in A. D. 26. He held his office till deposed in A. D. 36, and then he committed suicide.

To Herod Antipas was given Galilee west of the Jordan and north of Samaria, and Perea east of the Lower Jordan and Dead Sea, with the title of tetrarch. He reigned till after the death of Jesus, and was deposed about the year 39.

Philip, the best of the sons of Herod the Great, was made tetrarch of the country north and east of the Sea of Galilee. He, too, reigned throughout the life of Jesus, and died in A. D. 34.

The political divisions of Palestine during the life of Jesus were, therefore (1) Judea and Samaria under the rule of Roman procurators; (2) Galilee and Perea under Herod Antipas; and (3) small principalities east of Galilee and north of Perea, under the rule of Philip. Jacob's Well near Sychar in Samaria is the scene of to-day's lesson. Sychar was two miles east of Shechem, the chief city of the Samaritans. On the north towered Mount Ebal, and on the south, Mount Gerizim.



Political Divisions

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From Jerusalem Jesus and His disciples passed on to the country districts of Judea, and the disciples baptized those who came to them. The disciples of John the Baptist were jealous of their master's honor, and they came to him with news of Jesus as of one who was a rival in his divine mission. John gave his final testimony to Jesus as the Christ, reminding his disciples that he himself had disclaimed being the Messiah, and telling them that his influence, as an earth-born messenger, must decrease, while that of Jesus, as the beloved Son of God, must increase. About eight months were spent in Judea, and Jesus was on His way to Galilee when He stopped at Jacob's Well and held His conversation with the woman of Samaria.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Jesus decided to leave Judea and go to Galilee, and John says that He "must needs go through Samaria." Turn to your maps and point out these three provinces.

How could Jesus have reached Galilee without crossing Samaria? Most Jews so hated the Samaritans that they would not enter their land, but crossed the Jordan and traveled northeast of that river and then recrossed it into Galilee. What is this province east of the Jordan called? How much farther would it be to go around this way than to go directly from Jerusalem in Judea to Nazareth in Galilee? Jesus did not hate the Samaritans, and was as ready to bring to them as to the Jews His divine message, and therefore He took the direct route across their territory. At noon one day Jesus and His disciples came near to the town of Sychar in Samaria. Find this town on your maps. Near the town the road divides, and on the stone edge of a deep well at this place Jesus sat down to rest while His disciples went on to the town to buy food. This was the patriarch Jacob's well, and travelers still go to see it after all these centuries. This picture shows you how the entrance now looks. A ten-minutes walk from the well brings one now to a small village called El-Askar, which was in the time of Jesus the flourishing town called Sychar.

As Jesus sat on the well curb wearied from His long walk a Samaritan woman came with her waterpot to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. (See the Lesson Briefly Told.)

For Older Pupils. When a Jew wished to express his utmost hatred of another, he called him a Samaritan. "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a demon?" said they to Christ. The feeling still exists in Palestine. When Dr. Trumbull told a Jewish lady at Nablus, near Jacob's well, that he had visited the Samaritan community that morning, she shrank

away from him exclaiming, "Take a purifying bath." There is a tradition that three hundred priests with their trumpets and three hundred rabbis and their scholars once gathered in the temple court to curse the Samaritans with all the cursings in the law of Moses. Nor were the Samaritans less intense in their hatred of the Jews, nor less eager to annoy them. At the passover season it was the custom of the Jews, by lighting bonfires on the Mount of Olives which was the signal for other bonfires from hill to hill till the Euphrates was reached, to send to the Jews in exile the message that it was passover time at home and they were not forgotten. The Samaritans, like spiteful children, lighted rival bonfires on other days so as to confuse the watchers in the East.

Who were the Samaritans, and whence arose this hatred between them and the Jews? After the Assyrians conquered Samaria the Israelite inhabitants were taken to Babylonia, and colonists were brought from Babylonia to occupy their place in Samaria. At the time of Christ the Jews regarded the Samaritans as of pure heathen origin, descendants of those Babylonians, not akin to them, but the Samaritans claimed that not all the Jews had been driven from Samaria at the Captivity, and through intermarriage there was in their veins an admixture of Jewish blood, of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

The Babylonians on their settlement in Samaria found the land overrun by lions and other wild beasts, and they besought the Assyrian king Esar-haddon to send them an Israelitish priest to teach them how to worship the God of the land, for this affliction had come upon them through their failure to worship Him. This request was granted. When the Jews began to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem the Samaritans wished to share in the work. "Let us build with you," they said, "for we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-haddon." The Jews refused their offer of help, and then began the enmity between the two peoples which was intensified when the Samaritans built their rival temple on Mount Gerizim. (Ezra 4; Nehemiah 4.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I If Any Man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink

The Meaning of the Imagery. What Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well (verses 10–14) He publicly proclaimed at the Feast of the Tabernacles. "On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7. 37, 38.) At daybreak on each of the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles a priest went to the pool of Siloam and filled a golden pitcher with water. As he bore it back to the temple, musicians played and the people shouted joyously; at the temple he was received with three blasts of the trumpet; and shouts accompanied the pouring of the water into a silver basin at the side of the great altar. This ceremony was in commemoration of the water drawn from the rock in the wilderness to quench the thirst of the Israelites, and also, it is supposed, as a symbol both of the approaching "latter rain" and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the coming of the Messiah. It is thought that Jesus probably made the offer of Himself as the source of the

water of life either on the seventh day at the time when the ceremonial water was poured out by the priest, or on the eighth day, after the singing of the Hallel, at the time when it had been poured out on previous days.

In a country like Palestine where the want of water was often experienced, this imagery of the water of life was a very natural one. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," said Jesus in the Beatitudes. "He that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely," are the words of the last chapter of the last book of the Bible.

How Christ satisfies Thirst. Is your heart thirsty? If your thirst is for love, for companionship, for all that is needed for life and godliness, though you have a thirst which no thing or person in the world can quench, if you come to Jesus Christ He will satisfy you.

You do not try to feel that water satisfies you: you drink, and pursue your way, and you are satisfied. Similarly, in dealing with Christ, open your nature to Him, and say, I take Thee to fill this void, to quench this desire. Wait before Him, and then go forth and dare to reckon that Jesus Christ has done what He promised. As you dare to trust Him, according to your faith it shall be done. *B. F. Meyer,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

A Draught is often needed. On the rocks by the seashore I have seen marine creatures living when the tide was out; not in the briny pools it leaves, but on the dry and naked rock — in the withering air — in the burning, broiling sun. They lived because, when twice each day the foaming tide came in, and rising, covered the rocky shelves they clung to, they opened their shut and shelly mouths to drink in water enough to last them when the tide went out, and till the next tide came in. Even so, twice a day also, at the least, are we to replenish our thirsty souls — fill our emptiness from the ocean of grace and mercy that flows, free and full in Christ, to the least of saints and chief of sinners. *Thomas Guthrie.*

II Characteristics of True Worship

God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth. These words mean that true worship must be in harmony with the nature of God. God is Spirit. We are spirits. Our spirits, the highest part of ourselves, may worship or hold communion with the Infinite Spirit. The essential characteristics of true worship are these: it must be offered *in spirit,* and it must be offered *in truth.* In spirit, rather than in this or that place or in this or that manner; in truth, with a right conception of the nature of God and of His will toward us.

For such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. Our word *worship* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *weorðcipe: weorð,* worth, *scipe,* ship. Worship, then, is worthship, and the worship of God is an acknowledgment of His worthiness, a tribute to His worth. Our Father seeks as His worshippers those who have the capacity to admire His worth, the ability to appreciate His nature, the desire to live His life. We ought to worship Him, not because He asks it alone, but because we need it, and because we can not help it. "How do I worship when my heart in the fulness of love goes out to my mother?" questions Henry Ward Beecher. "God calls the human heart to

lift itself up to Him in the same loyalty, and enthusiasm, and zeal of love, a love purified and lifted up immeasurably."

The Reality of the Spirit. We constantly and necessarily, in the life of every day, assume the reality of invisible things. Take, in illustration, our knowledge of ourselves. Every man knows that his real self is not his visible body. We know the body is somehow inhabited and controlled by an invisible agent. All thoughtful men acknowledge this fact. Here, then, we are face to face with the invisible. We have found it before ever we started on our quest for it. Yes, we ourselves are invisible, spiritual beings. The visible part of us is but the instrument of the soul. The apostle is clearly right when he says, "The things that are seen are temporal."

The invisible things are the things which are certain. Even sensation is primarily a spiritual process. We do not see with the eyes or hear with the ears. The moment after life has left the body the eyes and ears are still as perfect as ever, but there is no sight, no hearing. The eyes are the physical organs or media of sight, but we see by means of the mind. In like manner, it is the mind only that feels pleasure or pain; the nerves as such have no power to feel. . . . The force with which we act is the force of our wills; there is no force in muscles as such. Subtract the will, and muscle is dead and powerless.

When, therefore, religion points to an invisible world it directs us to no strange sphere, but simply insists on the real meaning of a world in which we are already living. Everything that we esteem most, all the meaning and beauty of the world and of life, belongs wholly to an invisible world. If this is so, then how great the folly of that estimate of material things, amounting almost to worship, which is so common among men. The things that are seen are not only temporal, but they are, in themselves, meaningless and worthless. Their true value is realized only when they are made to minister to high spiritual interests. *Methodist Review.*

Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do All to the Glory of God. Can we worship God in the acts of our daily lives, or must worship be a thing distinct, unconnected with life's duties? Do our church-going, our Bible reading, our daily prayers constitute our worship of God? Many seem to believe this. "There is one command in the Bible which I can not obey. It is 'Pray without ceasing.' I can not spend my days idly in prayer; I have work to do," said a young girl. *Laborare est orare,* To labor is to pray, the Latins answer. Christ labored for the glory of God in His carpenter's shop at Nazareth, and in His countless daily acts of service during His public ministry; His life and His words alike teach us that we may truly worship God in the way in which we do the work He has given us to do and in the way we bring to Him all things, even the most trifling, in prayer. Jenny Lind once said, "I sing to God." Her songs were what we term secular as well as sacred, sometimes light and trivial, yet her words truly expressed the attitude of her soul. She felt that God's Presence was always with her, she believed that her ability to sing was a gift from Him, and she was using it to His glory.

Phillips Brooks as a student in the theological seminary attended a prayer meeting and listened to his classmates as they prayed and talked. The next day he met these men in the class-room and they had not prepared their lessons. They were not worshipping God aright, he said; "The boiler had no connection with the engine. The devotion did not touch the work which was

then and there the work and the only work for them to do." "The truth is for ever true, and yet for ever forgotten," he declares in one of his sermons, "that spirituality is a quality of the human soul, and not of the things that the soul deals with. And so there is nothing high or low which the soul may not deal with spiritually or unspiritually, as it will."

III The Claims of Jesus

Wonderful Claims. Let us recall the claims of Jesus in this and the preceding lessons. To Nathanael He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." To the men in the temple who were selling doves he claimed God as His Father, "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise." To the Jews who asked for a sign that should prove His authority to cleanse the temple, He replied, referring to His death and resurrection, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." To Nicodemus His words were: "No one hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him. He that believeth on Him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." And then to the woman of Samaria he proclaimed: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life." And then when she referred to the coming of the Messiah, Jesus solemnly affirmed, "I that speak unto thee am He."

These are wondrous claims, and others equally wonderful He made for Himself in the remainder of the Gospel. Not only does He claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the One who atones for the sins of the world, the One who has the power to give eternal life, but He reads the whole history of Israel as a preparation for His coming, and looking forward He sees Himself as the Judge of the whole world. He interprets the nature of the Father, and claims to be One with the Father.

True Claims. Jesus Christ said marvelous things about Himself. But is it not even more marvelous that people think Him modest, having said them? If one were forced to lay his finger on one single characteristic of Christ that is universally acknowledged, and that is really an unconscious confession of His divinity on the lips of every one who acknowledges this characteristic in Him, it is His humility. For Jesus Christ was the most boastful, the most arrogant person who ever lived if He was not divine. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I and the Father are one." "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Modesty! What modesty or humility can be found in those words if they are not true? Granted that Jesus Christ was what He claimed to be, and He is the humblest and most lowly-minded person who ever walked about among

men. If Jesus was not what He claimed to be, how does it come that the whole heart of man turns to Him and believes that He spoke the truth when He said, "I am meek and lowly in heart?" *Robert E. Speer,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The value of the worship does not accrue to the Deity, but to the worshipper. *David Swing.*

Christ's greatest utterances were delivered to congregations of one or two. *D. L. Moody.*

It is good to hunger and thirst, so it be for righteousness. *Christina Rossetti.*

The fountain of life is hid with Christ: Christ has enough for us, though we see not whence He has it. *Matthew Henry.*

We must not be too particular about the kind of sinner that we try to reach: Jesus took as much pains with Nicodemus as with the woman of Samaria. *Teunis S. Hamlin.*

To be spiritual is to live in conscious nearness to God. *Floyd W. Tomkins.*

Christ came to inspire us with the spirit of worship, not to direct the channel or the form of worship. *Lyman Abbott.*

God who registers the cup
Of mere cold water for His sake
To a disciple rendered up,
Disdains not His own thirst to slake
At the poorest love was ever offered. *Browning.*

Worship is the act of a child associating with his Father; loving to be where He is; entering by all the ways that have become sacred and dear into His closest companionship. *F. W. Farrar.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. Psa. 42. 2.

He that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely. Rev. 22. 17.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat. Isa. 55. 1.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Psa. 96. 9.

If any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. John 9. 31.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matt. 18. 20.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Jesus reached Jacob's well hungry and weary, yet He was not too weary to instruct and help the first one who came there. Am I ready to forget my own weariness in helping others?

Jesus saw an opportunity by the wayside to give the water of life to one in need of it. Is there danger of my seeking great opportunities for helping others and overlooking the small opportunities which are close at hand?

"He told me all things that ever I did," said the Samaritan woman. Am I living so that I need not fear to have my heart read by the Eye of God?

St. Augustine compares the Bible to the water of life, and says "There are first draughts and second draughts, and third draughts of this water to be enjoyed." I have not always experienced its refreshing power; I will take the third and fourth draughts and they will satisfy my thirst.

"Life," says an eminent writer, "is not like a suddenly twisted kaleidoscope which at every turn discloses startling scenery, events, and experiences; still there will not be a day without its stepping-stones to higher things, and there will be critical, privileged days bringing memorable chances and inspiration." The Samaritan woman little realized the day she approached the well and saw there a quiet Figure, in garb a lowly Jew, that the great privileged day of her life had come. Let me not fail to see in Christ's words to her the inspiration which shall make this a memorable day to me, a day on which, as Oliver Wendell Holmes expresses it, my soul shall be "stretched by a new idea and will never shrink back to its former dimensions."

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

To avoid any question of rivalry between Himself and the Baptist, Jesus left Judea for Galilee, going directly northward through Samaria. Near Sychar in Samaria He rested at Jacob's well while His disciples went on to the town for food. A Samaritan woman came to the well for water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. Most commonplace events are but milestones that mark our progress along the road we are traveling, but some are turning points which send us in another direction. This woman had come to a turn in her life's journey. Mockingly she answered Jesus' request: Does a Jew ask drink from a Samaritan? (for Jews had no dealings with Samaritans). Jesus heeded not her pert reply, but earnestly told her that she needed His help more than He hers; if she but knew who He was she would ask Him for living water. What strange words were these? Wonderingly, but more respectfully, she said that He had nothing with which to draw water, the well before them was deep; could He be greater than Jacob who had given them the well? One could drink of that water and thirst again, Jesus replied, but one who drank of the water that He would give should never thirst. The woman, now thoroughly aroused, did not comprehend the nature of this water which Jesus offered, but she acknowledged that she wanted it. Jesus would show her her need as a sinner of this great gift, and after bidding her bring her husband, and receiving the reply that she had no husband, He said: "Thou hast well said; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." This knowledge of her life convinced her that Jesus was a prophet. Dexterously she turned the conversation from her own guilt by pointing to Mount Gerizim and asking Him as a prophet to solve the long standing dispute between Samaritans and Jews in regard to the right place in which to worship. To this woman Jesus then made one of His greatest announcements, one that swept away the bigotry of centuries. The local institutions of the old covenant are passing away, for the new and universal one is at hand. Neither here on Mount Gerizim nor yet at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah alone must one worship; for God may be worshipped everywhere.

It matters not where God is worshipped, but it matters much that His divine

nature is understood, and that He is worshipped in the right way. The Samaritans knew little about the God whom they worshipped; the Jews had received a fuller revelation, and therefore through them the promised salvation must come. God is Spirit, and can be worshipped aright only in spirit and truth. Perplexed by His words which she but dimly comprehended, the woman said there was a final authority; the Messiah was coming and He would declare all things. Then Christ declared Himself, "I that speak unto thee am He."

The return of the disciples broke off the conversation. While they marveled that their Master spoke with a woman, yet because of their reverence for Him dared not question His reason for doing so, she forgot her errand to the well, and hastened on to the city to tell the good tidings. She had seen a Man who had told her all things that she had done, she exclaimed excitedly, they must come and see Him. They did come and see Him, and many believed, not for her words, they said, but because they have heard for themselves, and knew that "this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Christ's conversations.
2. What Christ has done for woman.
3. Religious bigotry.
4. The lesson which may be drawn from the silence of the disciples in regard to Christ's action. Calvin sees in it a lesson that we should be silent in regard to any work or word of God that is offensive to us.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. On what occasions did Jesus make use of the proverb given in verse 44? (Matt. 13. 54–57; Mark 6. 4; Luke 4. 24.) 2. What proverb of similar meaning have we? (Familiarity breeds contempt.) 3. Why does the nobleman use the phrase "come down" in verse 47? 4. Review the account of the first passover of Jesus' ministry, John 2. 13–3. 22. 5. What parable did Jesus give in showing that "one ought always to pray and not to faint? (Luke 18. 1–9.) 6. What was the first miracle referred to in verse 54? (John 2. 1–11.) 7. In what ways does the healing of the centurion's servant, recorded in Matthew 8. 5–13 and Luke 7. 1–10 resemble that of the nobleman's son? In what ways does it differ from this miracle?

LESSON VII — FEBRUARY 16

JESUS HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

John 4. 43–54. Commit vv. 49, 50.

Golden Text

The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. John 4. 50.

LESSON TEXT John 4. 43–54 TIME December, A. D. 27

43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.
44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.
45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.
46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.
47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.
48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.
49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.
50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.
51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him,* saying, Thy son liveth.
52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.
53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.
54 This *is* again the second miracle *that* Jesus did, when he was come out of Judæa into Galilee.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

43. *Now after two days he departed thence and went into Galilee.* R. V., *And after the two days he went forth from thence into Galilee. Two days.* See verse 40. *Thence.* From Sychar. *Into Galilee.* See verses 1–4.

44. *Jesus testified.* More than once: see Matt. 13. 54–57; Mark 6. 4; Luke 4. 16–30. *Prophet.* The Greek word προφήτης comes from πρό, a preposition meaning *for* or *before,* and φημί, φαναι, a verb meaning to *speak.* A prophet was not only one who foretold what was to occur, but also one who spoke for God, interpreted His will.

45. *Then when he came into Galilee.* R. V., *So when he came into Galilee. All the things that Jesus did at Jerusalem.* Review John's account, 2. 13–3. 22. *The feast.* The passover.

46. *So Jesus came again into Cana.* R. V., *He came therefore again unto Cana. Again.* See John 2. 1–11. *A nobleman.* R. V. margin, *King's officer.* The Greek word Βασιλικὸς is primarily an adjective meaning *royal.* The

ruler or tetrarch of Galilee, Herod Antipas, was often called "King." *At Capernaum.* Twenty-five miles from Cana.

47. *Come down.* Capernaum was on the Sea of Galilee, more than a third of a mile below Cana.

48. *Then said Jesus.* R. V., *Jesus therefore said. Except ye.* Jesus is addressing the nobleman, but He includes with him all those who demand signs before believing. "Not as a prophet uttering truth, but as a miracle worker He is sought in His own country." *Dods. Ye will not believe.* R. V., *Ye will in no wise believe.*

50. *Liveth.* Is well. *And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken.* R. V., *The man believed the word that Jesus spake.*

51. *And told him, saying, Thy son liveth.* R. V., *saying, that his son lived.*

51. *Then enquired he.* R. V., *So he inquired.* (The Greek particle **οὖν** is translated in the Authorized Version as a particle of time, "then"; the Revised Version gives it its correct use, "so," as a particle of sequence. This change often occurs.) *Began to amend.* Began to change for the better; he expects the cure to be gradual. *And they said unto him.* R. V., *they said therefore unto him. The seventh hour,* 1 P. M., according to the Jewish reckoning from sunrise to sunset.

53. *At the same hour in the which.* R. V., *at that hour in which.*

54. *The second miracle.* John 2. 11. R. V., *sign. Where he was come out.* R. V., *having come out.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

44. *A prophet hath no honour in his own country.* The meaning of this proverb is clear, but what is its application here, and its connection with Jesus' going into Galilee and being received by the Galileans? What was Jesus' "own country"; Judea, where He was born, or Galilee, where He had lived so long? Many interpretations have been offered. It was Judea, say some scholars; He was rejected there and went to Galilee where He was received. His own country was Galilee, say others; He left Judea because of His over-popularity which threatened a collision with the Pharisees, and went to Galilee where there was little danger of His being too highly honored, and yet there He was welcomed at first because of His miracles at Jerusalem. Weiss, a German commentator, refers to Christ's words about the harvest in verses 53–138, and says: "Because Jesus came to sow and not to reap, He went to His own land where, according to the custom of the world, He could win the honor, which He must wish, only through the hard work of sowing."

George Matheson, in his *Portrait of Christ,* offers this interesting interpretation: "Jesus gives a curious reason for going back, 'a prophet hath no honor in his own country.' One would have thought this a reason for keeping away. But consider where He had been in the interval — in the metropolis. He had stood in the center of Jewish life, in the place where the ways met. His presence had made a mark: His influence had been felt in high quarters; He had received the imprimatur of the capital. Looking at the matter in this light, do you not see the force of His reason for going to Nazareth? He might put it into words like these: 'I may go back now to my own city, for I have no longer the atmosphere of my own city. As long as I had no recognition elsewhere I had no recognition there. But now I have been recognized by the metropolis.

Copyright, J. J. Tissot

HEALING THE NOBLEMAN'S SON—*Tissot*

Jerusalem has seen me, listened to me. Little Nazareth will not refuse after that. It will not any more look upon me merely as the home prophet. It will receive me, not on the ground of being a countryman, but on the ground that I have transcended my country, that I have been impregnated with another air, that I have obtained my credentials from a higher city — the City of David.'"

45. *Having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem.* His countrymen, who had thought so little of Him previously, had heard of His Judean fame, and echoed the recognition and applause of the South. They had not discovered the greatness of this Galilean, although He had lived among them for thirty years; but no sooner do they hear that He has created a sensation in Jerusalem than they begin to be proud of Him. Such a change of sentiment was not likely to escape the observation of Jesus nor to deceive Him. It is with an accent of disappointment, not unmingled with reproach, that He utters His first recorded words in Galilee: "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will in no wise believe." *Marcus Dods, Expositer's Bible.*

49. *Sir, come down ere my child die.* Let us not lose sight of the fact that the craving among so many modern Christians for our Lord's visible return to earth, is just a repetition in another form of this nobleman's prayer when he asked that Jesus would go down to Capernaum to heal his son. We do not need His visible presence to cope with the evils of our times any more than this nobleman needed it at Capernaum for the cure of his boy. He is here already, fulfilling His own promise, "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world," and in that spiritual presence He is really and truly nearer to His people as a whole than He would be were His throne set up in some special locality of earth, where alone He could be seen and applied to by any one for assistance. *William M. Taylor, Miracles of our Saviour.*

53. *So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said unto him.* At the time the Diet of Nuremburg was held, Luther was earnestly praying in his own dwelling; and at the very hour when the edict granting free toleration to all Protestants was issued, he ran out of his house, crying out: "We have gained the victory." *Tholuck.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Shore of the Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee. "Jehovah hath created seven seas," said the rabbis, "but the Sea of Gennesaret (Galilee) is His delight." A beach that varies from a few hundred yards to half a mile in width intervenes between the lake and its surrounding hills. Passing around the lake to the left, one crosses on the northwest the beautiful Plain of Gennesaret where Capernaum was situated. Below is Magdala. About five miles away from the Sea, southwest of Magdala, is Kurn Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin, where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. This is often spoken of as the "Mount of Beatitudes." The green slopes soon change to the dark, imprisoning cliffs at Tiberias. Then the ribbon-like coast widens till at the southern end the Jordan Valley, four miles wide, stretches away southward. Upon the

eastern side of the lake the wall of hills is higher than on the western side, and the beach is half a mile wide except at Khersa. On the northeast is the Plain of el-Batiha, where Jesus fed the five thousand.

In the time of Jesus the shores of the lake were well-wooded, green and fruitful. The climate was pleasant, Josephus tells us. Now the shores are a wilderness, and the heat from April to July is intense. Only one city (Tiberias) and a few miserable hamlets exist where nine large cities flourished. No other region in all Palestine is so closely associated with the life of Jesus. Everywhere about the lake we can trace His footsteps, but it was the northwestern shore that He traversed most often, the district between Bethsaida on the further side of the Jordan and Magdala, at the point where the lake is widest.

Capernaum was an important city. It had a Roman garrison under the command of a centurion. Jerusalem alone surpassed Capernaum as a meeting place for all people, for travelers passed through it on their way from Damascus and the Euphrates to the Mediterranean coast, to Jerusalem, and to Egypt. Peter and Andrew settled here, and Jesus made it His home after His rejection at Nazareth.

From Capernaum, where the nobleman's son was sick, to **Cana,** where the father went to seek Jesus was probably a distance of twenty miles. Two sites are claimed for Cana, one a few miles northeast of Nazareth, the other still farther away on the north of that town. Cana was the birthplace of Nathanael. Here Jesus wrought two miracles recorded in John 2. 1–11; 4. 46–54.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When the disciples returned to Jesus at Jacob's Well they besought Him to eat, but His hunger had been forgotten in the joy of administering to the soul hunger of another. "I have meat to eat ye know not of," He told them. Could any one have brought Him food? they questioned, but Jesus explained, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." Then pointing to the Samaritans who were coming to Him, He cried out: "Ye say that harvest time will be here in four months; look up and see the fields ready for harvest. The workers die and other workers take up their work, but all alike are sent by God to bring men into life eternal, and all alike shall have joy in their work." After tarrying two days in Samaria they continued their way into Galilee.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Mr. Moody was once talking to a number of street boys, and trying to explain to them what faith meant. He had a beautiful book with him, and he held it out to one of the boys, saying, "This is yours if you take it." Most of the boys laughed, and thinking Mr. Moody was having sport with him, the boy refused to take the book. Mr. Moody repeated his offer to the other boys, and when one boy at last stepped forward and received it, the others asked if that boy were really going to keep it. "Of course, it is his book; I offered to give it to the one who would take it, and he has taken it," replied Mr. Moody, and then he went on to show those boys that faith means simply taking God at His word, and believing all that He has said. To-day we learn how a nobleman took Jesus at His word, and be-

lieved what He said to him, although it was a very difficult thing which Jesus required him to believe.

Where was Jesus in our last Sunday's lesson? He was on his way from what province? To what province was He going? Point out these three provinces on your map. To what city did He come as our lesson to-day tells us? Find Cana. Where was the nobleman's home? Find Capernaum. Look at your relief map and tell me what was the elevation of Capernaum. Instead of elevation what word would better describe the location of Capernaum? From this depression in the Jordan Valley to how great an elevation did the nobleman ascend on his way to Cana?

For Older Pupils. From all the many events which occurred during the first period of Jesus' Galilean ministry, so fully narrated in the Synoptic Gospels, John selects but one, the healing of the nobleman's son. "Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;" says John, "but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." The way in which Jesus taught the nobleman that He was not a mere miracle-worker, that He had life in Himself and could restore life by His word as readily as by His Presence, John would record, for it proves that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I A Prophet hath No Honor in his own Country

Why the Proverb is True. "The farther off I am read from my own home," complained Montaigne, "the better I am esteemed." Thomas Bailey Aldrich has expressed in four lines one reason why some prophets are unhonored at home:

> "Bonnet in hand, obsequious and discreet,
> The butcher that served Shakespeare with his meat
> Doubtless esteemed him little, as a man
> Who knew not how the market-prices ran."

Calvin gives two other reasons for the truth of the proverb that a prophet hath no honor in his own country: the natural slowness to believe great things of one who has been familiar from childhood, and the jealousy that we feel because of the distinction of our acquaintances.

Why should one feel that honor accorded to an acquaintance detracts from his own? And yet that is the first impulsive thought of many, though they would not own it, perhaps, even to themselves. James a Senator of the United States? Why, we were brought up together, and he is no smarter than I am; why should he be famous and I unknown? How many follies of his boyhood I can recall. How stupid he was in arithmetic at school. I excelled him in scholarship at college. What has he done that this honor should come to him? Why am I not properly appreciated?

These lines are written in German on the walls of an old German castle; they might well be learned and put into practice by old and young:—

> I love a thing that's fine
> Ev'n when it is not mine,

And, though it never mine can be,
Yet it delights and gladdens me.

Unappreciated Blessings. Many hearing Jesus were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? And, what is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of His sisters here with us? And they were offended in Him, and Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. (Mark 6. 2–4.)

It is because the prophet is so well known, his life is so familiar, that he is not appreciated in his own country. There is grave danger that we may fail rightly to appreciate many things of infinite worth to us because of our very familiarity with them. Who has not wished that he could read the Scriptures as one does who reads them for the first time? Very helpful is it to read the Bible in another language, for the less familiar words present the thoughts to us more distinctly. There is, too, a fearful familiarity with the phraseology of Christianity, which permits us to use such terms as the atonement, regeneration, spirituality, very fluently, but oftentimes with vague or mistaken ideas of their true meaning.

A kindred warning comes from Izaak Walton: "Let not the blessings we receive daily from God make us not to value, or not to praise Him, because they be so common."

II The Growth of Faith

The Nobleman's Example. We see in this nobleman three degrees of faith. First his faith is in "signs"; he believes that Jesus has the power to work a miracle, and if He will only come to Capernaum He can heal his son. This faith leads him to seek Jesus, and his seeking brings him the reward of greater faith. His faith rises to belief in Jesus' simple word. "Go thy way; thy son liveth," are Jesus' assuring, commanding words to him. This greater faith leads him to obey Jesus' words, and his obedience brings to him the greatest faith of all, not belief merely in Jesus as a miracle worker, not even simple belief in His words, but belief, faith, trust in Jesus Himself. He believed and his whole house.

The First Step. Dr. van Dyke compares one who says he knows the power of God and is trusting Him, and yet makes no effort to prove by his life that he trusts Him, to a man sitting on the bank of a mighty river and saying, "This river is able to bear me to my journey's end." What he needs to do is to push his boat out into the current, and feel its resistless force, and move onward with it. Then he will know the power that now he only knows about.

Every one wishes for more faith, but if he used the little faith he has, as the nobleman used his, it would grow to greater faith. "If God made no response except to perfect faith, who could hope for help? He is the God of sprouting seeds and little vital beginnings." At Reigate, England, there is a tree which is called "The Tree of Decision." Under its shade Lady Henry Somerset fought out one of the severest struggles of her life. She doubted whether there really was a God when suddenly she seemed to receive this message, "Live as though I were, and you shall know that I am." God became real to her, she declared, as she lived up to the decision thus made.

A Growing Christian must grow in Faith. The little child in the home knows his father and mother but imperfectly; it is only after years of companionship with them, and after he has himself grown to man's estate, that he can understand and appreciate the many sides of their natures. The young Christian does not know all that he may know about his Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ; if, after years of companionship with Them, he does not know Them better and trust Them more fully there has been something wrong about his Christian life, he has not attained "unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, no longer a child, but grown up in all things into Him, who is the Head, even Christ."

If we think of faith as a belief in certain propositions we may not see the need of increasing our faith; but if we realize that the object of our faith is a Person, not a fact, and that our faith in God is a personal experience, we shall see that there must be progression in our faith. "Faith is that act and habit of the mind by which the truth of God is brought in and made a part of one's very being; the act and habit of the mind, the heart, the soul, by which the facts concerning God are made realities." "Faith in Christ is first of all this: such as He was I want to be; His is the kind of life I want to live; His is the kind of character I want to possess. A man may believe what creed he will, and if this is not in his heart, he has not faith in Christ."

Says Hamilton Wright Mabie, "Our faith is too often like a tiny lantern held by a traveler in a dark night, which illumines a little path at the feet; it is not like a sun which lifts a whole world into light."

III Prayer in Time of Trouble

An Interpretation of our Lesson. I know how the nobleman felt. I have watched the labored breathing of my own little boy. I have heard the kind tone of the physician telling me that he believed my boy had only a few hours to live. I recall the dull anguish with which his words fell on my ears. I know what it is to cast one's self before God praying, "Come down ere my child die," feeling that, if death should come, I would still trust God, yet with the heart's cry, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

I have seen my boy's quivering nostrils grow quiet, his painful breathing become easier, till the struggle with death passed into natural sleep. I have watched the surprised hope on the physician's face till its unspoken assurance showed me that the crisis had passed, and that my boy would come back to me. Therefore I believe that God, who revealed Himself in Cana through Jesus Christ, answers prayer. The sign of the healed boy in Capernaum helps me to believe on Christ, but the sign of the healed boy in Boston helps me more. . . . I should not dare to pray for help from God and then refuse it when the doctor brought it to me. I should still believe in Jesus Christ if my boy had died. Those who know Christ are satisfied even in the depth of bereavement with His assurance, "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live." *A. E. Dunning,* in *Sunday School Times.*

Prayer in Temptation. One need hold no strange or unusual theory of the value of prayer to recognize its beneficent power over the lives of men. In moments of temptation a sudden realization of the presence of God

and an uplifted look for help have saved many a man who otherwise would have fallen.

According to our mood or temperament or training or religious experience, prayer is a desire or a duty, a privilege or a problem. Theologians will always have room to question and think and write concerning the power of prayer as related to God's immutability; but the need of prayer remains, and the strength that comes from prayer is a fact that can not be denied. In times of sorrow men turn instinctively to God for help. In time of temptation prayer is so great a refuge that it has been truly said that

Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees. *The Youth's Companion.*

The Help which lasts. Have you never seen men and women whom some disaster drove to a great act of prayer, and by and by the disaster was forgot, but the sweetness of religion remained and warmed their souls? So have I seen a storm in later spring; and all was black, save where the lightning tore the cloud with thundering rent. The winds blew and the rain fell, as though heaven had opened its windows. What a devastation there was! Not a spider's web that was out of doors escaped the storm, which tore up even the strong-branched oak. But ere long the lightning had gone by, the thunder was spent and silent, the rain was over, the western wind came up with its sweet breath, the clouds were chased away, and the retreating storm threw a scarf of rainbows over her fair shoulders and resplendent neck, and looked back and smiled, and so withdrew and passed out of sight. But for weeks long the fields held up their hands full of ambrosial flowers, and all the summer through the grass was greener, the brooks were fuller, and the trees cast a more umbrageous shade, because that storm passed by — though all the rest of the earth had long ago forgot the storm, its rainbows, and its rain. *Theodore Parker.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The question is not, how much do I believe, but, how do I believe? *Phillips Brooks.*

Belief or unbelief
Bears upon life, determines its whole course. *Browning.*

I have lived to thank God that all my prayers have not been answered. *Jean Ingelow.*

Help us to reach out past the things we can not understand to the God we trust. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Be boundless in thy faith, for not misspent
Is confidence unto the Father lent;
Thy need is sowed and rooted for His rain. *George Macdonald.*

"Why doth our prayer its answer not behold?
Man asks in copper and God grants in gold."
More things are wrought by prayer
Than the world dreams of. *Tennyson.*

God's promises of answer to prayer never fail of their fulfilling; but man's hope of answers to his prayer beyond the promises of God are always liable to disappointment. *H. Clay Trumbull.*

Intelligence is required of some; faith is required of all. *Christina Rossetti.*

What is needed is not so much great faith, as faith in a great God. *Alexander Urquhart.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth. Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. Mark. 9. 23–24.

In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. Phil. 4. 6.

The very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. John 5. 36.

Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Psa. 50. 15.

We walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. 5. 7.

And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. 1 John 5. 14.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John 20. 29.

Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good;
Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him. Psa. 34. 8.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

"The man believed the word which Jesus had spoken unto him." The Gospels are full of the words which Jesus has spoken unto me. Do I believe them? Do I trust Jesus and take Him at His word? Does my life show that I have this confidence in Him?

Ruskin says that "there is nothing so small but that we may honor God by asking His guidance of it, or insult Him by taking it into our own hands. His is not the finite authority or intelligence that can not be troubled with small things." I will take all my troubles and temptations to God in prayer and ask His help and counsel.

Do I know God, or do I merely know about Him?

It is a comforting thought that God can take this little faith of mine and lead me through a life of obedience to Him to that perfect faith which trusts Him wholly and unreservedly.

Luther says that "a true believer will crucify the question, 'Why?' He will obey without questioning," I will not be one of those who, except they see signs and wonders, will in no wise believe. I will obey without questioning.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

After two days in Samaria Jesus went on to Galilee. The reason for this John finds in the proverb which Jesus Himself used, that a prophet has no honor in his own country. Jesus returned to His own country of Galilee because He had lived there so many years that He was well known and would receive little honor, and He would, therefore, have a quiet time with His disciples. But the fame of the miracles He wrought at Jerusalem had preceded Him and the Galileans at first received Him gladly.

When He reached Cana He was met by a nobleman who had come from Capernaum to beseech Him to return with him and cure his son who lay at the point of death. The petitioner met with a seemingly strange rebuke: "Except you and the people of Galilee see signs and wonders you will not believe." Jesus would educate the nobleman's faith. The latter repeated his earnest plea, "Come down ere my child die." "It is not necessary for Me to go to Capernaum," then said Jesus, "Go your way; your son shall live." The father's faith responded to the command. He returned homeward. Perhaps he was hindered on the way, or else his trust in Jesus' promise was so great that he felt not the need of hastening, for it was the next day before he met his servants who were coming to tell him that his son lived. "What hour did he begin to improve?" inquired the father. "Yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon the fever left him." "The very hour in which Jesus told me that my son would live!" exclaimed the happy father. His faith at first, like that of the Samaritans, had been based on what he had heard of Jesus' power, then his interview with Jesus led him to obey His word unhesitatingly, and now at last he could say as the Samaritans finally said, Now I believe, not because of others' speaking, for I have heard and seen for myself, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Faith cures.

2. Modern philanthropy. There are many people who will relieve hopeless distress for one who will help at a hopeful pinch. I like to prop the falling more than feed the fallen. *Ruskin in a letter to Thackeray.*

3. We can not work Christ's miracles, but we can have His spirit. We can not heal instantaneously, but we can provide hospitals for healing slowly; we can provide homes even for the incurable. *George Dana Boardman.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Tell the story of the healing of the man sick with the palsy. (Mark 2. 1–12.) 2. What miracles of healing on the Sabbath are recorded? (Matt. 12. 9–13; Mark 1. 21–28; 29–32; Luke 13. 10–17; 14. 1–6; John 5. 1–10; 9. 1–14.) 3. Tell the story of the healing of the man with the withered hand. (Mark 3. 1–6.) 4. Where were the other miracles already recorded by John wrought? (Galilee.) What was the effect on the Jews of the two Galilean miracles? (Their faith was aroused.) Of this Judean miracle? (Their hostility was aroused.) 5. What was the purpose of this miracle? (John 5. 36.) 6. What does Christ say was the source of His power? (John 5. 19.) 7. With what man in one of Christ's parables may the man at the pool of Bethesda be compared in his helplessness and the treatment he received from others? (The Parable of the Good Samaritan.)

JESUS AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

John 5. 1–9. (Read John 5. 1–18.) Commit vv. 8, 9.

Golden Text

Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. Matt. 8. 17.

LESSON TEXT John 5. 1–9 TIME April, A. D. 28

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.
3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.
4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.
5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.
6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case,* he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?
7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.
8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.
9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *After this.* R. V., *after these things.* The events of the Galilean period (John 4. 45) of which John has narrated only the cure of the nobleman's son. *A feast of the Jews.* "The feast was probably that of Purim, celebrated in memory of the great deliverance under Ahasuerus (see Esther 9. 21–26), held on the 14th and 15th of Adar, *i. e.* March; but the point is much disputed." *Reith.* Some noted authorities hold that this was a passover feast, the second in Christ's ministry.

2. *At Jerusalem.* R. V., in *Jerusalem. The sheep market,* R. V., *the sheep gate.* The Greek word προβατικῇ is an adjective meaning *pertaining to sheep.* πύλῃ, gate, should be supplied, not ἀγορᾷ, market, as in the authorized version; it is not known that there was such a place as a sheep-market in Jerusalem, but the sheep-gate is mentioned in Nehemiah. Its site has not been certainly identified. *A pool.* Where the sheep destined for sacrifice were washed. *In the Hebrew tongue.* R. V., *in Hebrew.* The language spoken at the time was the Aramaic dialect, not the pure Hebrew of Scripture. *Bethesda.* "House of Compassion." R. V., margin, Some ancient authorities read Bethsaida, others Bethzatha.

3. *In these lay a great multitude.* "As may be seen on a higher grade of social life at any modern Spa." *Reith. A great multitude of impotent folk,*

of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. R. V., *a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered. Impotent.* The Greek word ἀσθενούντων, means *those without strength. Halt.* Lame.

4. This entire verse, as well as the last clause of verse 3, is omitted in the R. V. "It is omitted in four of the five best manuscripts, in three is marked as spurious." *Farrar.* "The words were doubtless added to the text from the margin, in consequence of the words of the impotent man in verse 7 about the troubling of the waters." *Reith.* The pool had probably an intermittent spring which possessed medicinal properties. "According to the Jewish popular conception there was a personal angel who produced the moving of the water." *Lange.*

5. *Which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.* R. V., *who had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity.* The infirmity was probably paralysis.

6. *Lie.* R. V., *lying. Wilt thou.* R. V., *wouldest thou. Whole.* Sound, well. Our words *whole, holy, heal, hale, health,* are all related, being derived from the one Anglo-Saxon word *hāl.*

7. *Impotent.* R. V., *sick. When the water was troubled.* Apparently only the freshly flowing water of the intermittent spring was beneficent.

8. *Rise.* R. V., *arise.* See Mark 2. 9.

9. *Immediately.* R. V., *straightway. And on the same day was the Sabbath.* R. V., *Now it was the Sabbath on that day.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. *There is at Jerusalem a pool.* The pool has recently been identified on the north side of the temple area, a short distance from the Church of St. Anne. Clermont Ganneau pointed out that its site should not be far from the Church of St. Anne, and in 1888 Herr Shick found in that locality two sister pools, one fifty-five and the other sixty feet long. The former was arched in by five arches, while five corresponding porches ran alongside the pool. By the crusaders a porch had been built over this pool, with a crypt framed in imitation of the five porches and with an opening in the floor to get down to the water. That they regarded this pool as that mentioned here is shown by their having represented on the wall of the crypt the angel troubling the water. *Marcus Dods.*

4. *An angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water.* This verse is undoubtedly spurious and does not belong here. Many suppose that if a passage is to be excluded from the text of Scripture, the intrusion of it is evidence of intended fraud; and that the adulteration of the sacred text was for the purpose of deception. If you will consider how these things chiefly arose, you will see that they were rather mistakes than intended fraud, and that they do not in any way invalidate the text that remains. Formerly there was no printing. All books were manuscripts, continuous rolls; and it was a literary habit, where a passage seemed obscure, to add, either between the lines or in the margin — sometimes in one place and sometimes in another — corrections or explanations. The next copyist, not being, perhaps, so intelligent, copied, it may be, along with the text, these explanations, which had been made purely for the convenience of the one who went before. And so it passed on down. All copies springing from that one were vitiated by additions which never were intended to add anything, but were simply meant to be

a commentary. Thus, by the fault of the copyist, there came to be included in the text what did not belong to it, and this verse, by the great majority of commentators and critical judges of Scripture text, is now rejected. *H. W. Beecher.*

The Jews, after the captivity, had come back deeply impressed by the angelology and demonology which they had learnt from the Persians. They attributed everything, even the most ordinary daily events, to the action of good or evil spirits. This verse was a marginal note by some Jewish Christian who shared the common superstition. *F. W. Farrar.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *A pool having five porches.* Mineral springs are abundant in Western Asia, and most of them formerly had protecting structures over them, some of whose remains are yet standing. Bethesda is now dry, but the Pool of Siloam, which is of the same nature, and was probably supplied from the same source, has an intermittent ebb and flow occurring every few minutes. Near Beirut is a fountain of this kind, gushing forth from the foot of Lebanon in so copious a flow that its waters are utilized as a mill-stream to supply flour for the city; but it is periodically dry for hours at a time. *Van Lennep, Bible Lands.*

The porches were built around the pool for the protection of the sick who came there to bathe. They were small compartments, covered overhead, and open toward the pool.

8. *Take up thy bed.* The bed was only a blanket or mat which could be easily rolled up and carried. Sometimes it was merely the outer garment. Those in better circumstances had a mattress filled with cotton which was thrown down at night on the floor or on an elevated divan. (See 2 Kings 1. 4.)

Taking up a Bed

9. *It was the Sabbath.* "Take heed to yourselves and bear no burden on the Sabbath day" was the command of the prophet Jeremiah. (Jer. 17. 21.) When the Pharisees spoke of what it was lawful or unlawful to do on the Sabbath, they referred not only to the laws in the Old Testament, but also to their own interpretations of those laws. The rabbis had made thirty-nine "primary rules" and countless "derivative rules" in regard to what could not lawfully be done on the Sabbath. Then they had certain ways,—termed Erubin, "connections,"—by which some of these burdensome laws could be evaded. Their law in regard to carrying anything on the Sabbath said: "Whosoever on the Sabbath bringeth anything in, or taketh anything out from a public place to a private one, if he hath done this inadvertently, he shall sacrifice for his sin; but if willfully, he shall be cut off and shall be stoned." This law could be evaded by "connecting" one building with another by means of a wire or

rope extending through the streets, or even by laying a beam over the narrow entrance of an alley. "This, by a legal fiction, made them 'a private dwelling,' so that everything was lawful there which a man might do on the Sabbath in his own house."

All acts of healing were forbidden on the Sabbath. Six times, either directly or indirectly, Jesus was accused of breaking this law.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In our last lesson Jesus was at Cana in Galilee. He went from there to Capernaum, which became thereafter "His own city." He remained in Galilee several months, and then again took the long journey southward through Lower Galilee, Samaria, and Judea as far as Jerusalem.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The healing of the nobleman's son occurred in December, A. D. 27, while the healing of the infirm man at Bethesda is placed in April of the next year. The intervening events are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus had given His sermon at Nazareth, the burden of which was the survival of the unfittest, as George Matheson says, and had been rejected there; then followed the more formal calling of the fishermen and the miraculous draught of fishes, the day of miracles in Capernaum, a preaching tour through Galilee, the healing of a leper and of a paralytic, and the call of Matthew.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you know any one who has been sick a long time, and is weak and helpless? Do you consider how thankful you ought to be that you are well and strong? A young girl was very discontented because she was poor; so many of her friends had all the money they wanted to spend for beautiful things; money ruled the world, and she had little of it. "Why, you are worth a hundred thousand dollars!" said a friend. "What do you mean?" she returned. "You have two strong arms, would you give one of them for ten thousand dollars?" "No!" "Or one of your feet for fifteen thousand?" "Of course not." "But perhaps you would spare one of your bright eyes for twenty-five thousand dollars?" "Not even for that sum," laughingly replied the girl. "Well, reckon all these possessions together, and see if you are not worth one hundred thousand dollars. Do not complain so long as these good gifts are yours."

On leaving a famous health resort in the forests of Germany a grateful patient wrote in a book:—

Content return I from this blessed wood,
I found here health, life's highest, truest good.

And then a wiser man wrote beneath his lines:—

That is not life's best good, that is but half;
Else were most blest a healthy little calf.

There were many sick and maimed people in Palestine in the time of Christ, and again and again we read of His compassion for them. To-day it is the story of the helpless invalid at the pool of Bethesda that we study, and we

shall miss the best part if we see in it only Christ's power to heal a disease of the body and the great blessing He thus brought to this man, and fail to see the greater good that may be ours through His power to bring health to our spiritual lives.

For Older Pupils. A young man who was a great sufferer from a spinal disease was cared for many weeks by the students in Union Theological Seminary. He was given a room in the building and the students took turns in caring for him day and night. He was so badly deformed that he was unable to lie down, his eyes were so sensitive to the light that the room had to be kept totally dark, and he never knew a moment's freedom from the most intense pain. Why must he linger on and suffer so, was the question often asked, and what a burden he will be upon us, was the thought of many students when he was first brought to them. But he proved a blessing instead of a burden, and in that darkened sick-room they learned a lesson which they never forgot. He was invariably brave and cheerful and serene, full of Christian faith in the goodness of God and of joy in the thought of the Heaven to which he was going. Never afterwards was one of them tempted to complain at his own lot, but he recalled that sufferer and was ashamed of his murmuring.

What would life be if there were no suffering in it? A very happy world, you say. Did you ever think what suffering does for the world? This world is but a brief school-day in which our characters are being trained for the unending life to come. Not only do we learn patient endurance and submission to God's will in the suffering that comes to us, but we learn thoughtfulness and sympathy and unselfishness and many other noble virtues, through caring for the suffering that comes to others.

Many instances are given in the Gospels which show the boundless compassion of Jesus, and with them all, as well as in the parable of the Good Samaritan, we may read His words, "Go thou and do likewise."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Do the Impossible

What is Necessary. The man in our lesson is an object of great pity. He has been sick thirty-eight years, and he is wholly unable to move the few feet from his place under the covered porch to the pool before him. Jesus bids him do an impossible thing, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk," are His words. Can he exert his own will power, and by this help alone do what he has long been unable to do? History is full of examples of what has been accomplished by sheer force of will power. "People do not lack strength, they lack will," said Victor Hugo. "Nothing is impossible to the man who can will," said Mirabeau. "I trample on impossibilities," said Pitt. "You can do whatsoever you earnestly undertake," was Stonewall Jackson's belief. There is much truth in these words; seemingly impossible things have been done over and over again by those who refused to become discouraged and willed to accomplish them. Yet will power can not accomplish everything. No doubt this man's will power had grown very weak during his long sickness, but if he had said to himself with tremendous determination, "I will get down to the pool," he could not have done it.

Something else was necessary. Was it faith? If he believed in Jesus as the

great Physician, would this faith have enabled him to rise and walk? We know that faith has accomplished wonders in human affairs. The Great Western, the first steam vessel that crossed the Atlantic, carried in the captain's cabin a lengthy document which proved positively that no ship could be propelled by steam from England to America. Numerous telegraphic cables connect the Old World and the New, and messages can be sent entirely around the world in a few seconds. Yet until the first cable was laid every one declared it an utter impossibility. It was the faith of a few men which kept them at work till the impossible was accomplished. Can faith accomplish whatever it will? There are sick people to-day who have great will power and equally great faith that they will get well, faith even in God that He will cure them, and yet they remain sick.

Something besides will power and faith is evidently necessary. What is it? With the man at the pool of Bethesda it was the will of Christ. If Christ had not willed that the man should walk, when the man's faith led him to put forth his own will in an endeavor to obey Christ, he could not have done so.

"But strive with God;
There's naught impossible to Him and thee,"

says a Japanese poem. The reason that there is "naught impossible to God and thee" has been aptly expressed by an old writer who said: "God will not send thee into a wood to fell an oak with a penknife. When He calls thee to work thou never didst, He will give thee strength thou never hadst." Too often some one goes into the wood with his own little penknife when God has not willed that he should cut down the oak. The reason that all sick people who have great faith in God are not cured is that God's will is different from their will.

These beautiful words of Emerson's:—

"So night is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When duty whispers low 'Thou must'
The youth replies 'I can,'"

are grandly true when the duty is of God's appointing.

All Things are Possible with God. "Jesus looking upon them saith, with men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." Mark 10. 27. The word "with" is generally read here as if it were equivalent to "to," and the passage is interpreted "to men this is impossible, but not to God: all things are possible to God." But Jesus Christ said, "with," not "to," and there is a wide difference between the two words. "To" would set forth the difference between man's impotence and God's power; "with" links the impotent man with the omnipotent God. The one finds and leaves the man in his helplessness; the other lifts him and unites him with God's eternal strength. With men it is impossible, but with God, that is, to men with God, all things are possible. Instead of being a passage that emphasizes man's limitation, it is a passage that preaches man's practical omnipotence.

When we speak of the omnipotence of God, we mean that all things are possible with God that are consistent with Himself and consistent with the nature of that upon which He works. God can not deny Himself; God can not violate His own laws; the Judge of all the earth must do right. Neither can He change the essential quality of things; He can not make wrong right, and He

can not make twice two five; but all things that are consistent with God's nature, and with the nature of that upon which He works are possible to God.

So with man. All things become possible to him with God. That does not mean that he receives power that he can exercise according to every whim and fancy and caprice. It means all things are possible to him consistent with his nature and consistent with the will of God. When a man is linked with God, every resource and every kind of power that is at God's command is laid under tribute to his need and waits upon his faith. With men these things are impossible, but not with God. To man with God all things are possible. Man plus God is, to all practical purposes of the divine will and requirements of the divine life, omnipotent as God Himself. This means that with God all that a man ought to be, he can be, and all that a man ought to do, he can do. *Samuel Chadwick,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

II Wilt thou be made Whole?

The Reason for the Question. Jesus begins by asking a seemingly useless question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" What makes it seem useless is the fact that we attribute to the impotent man our own healthy condition. Jesus knows better. He sees him listless, apathetic, taking it as a matter of course that he is unfit to survive. He desires to awaken the dormant wish for something better. Before all things, He would move the heart of the man. In the cure of human distress Jesus habitually asked the co-operation of the patient. Sometimes He appeals to the faith; here He appeals to the desire; in either case the principle is the same. And what is the reason of the principle? It is because Jesus wants the survival of the unfittest to be the transformation of the unfittest. He does not want unfitness itself to survive; that would be to Him the least desirable of all evolutions. The aim of Christianity is to have the deformed transformed. It is not simply to preserve the weak; it is to annihilate their weakness, to make them dominant forces in the kingdom of God. Accordingly, the first appeal of Jesus is to the secret of all human force — the will. "Wilt thou be healed?" It is a declaration on the part of Jesus that in His system of salvation man is not to be passive. *George Matheson, Studies in the Portrait of Christ.*

Moral Inability. Arise; take up thy bed and walk! "What? Walk with these shrivelled limbs that have not served me for thirty-eight years? Take up my bed with these helpless arms that have lain so long numb and helpless beside me! Does this man mock me?"

Moral inability in consequence of sin is just as real as the impotency of that paralytic. The will is palsied. Mind, conscience, and heart are palsied. Now, are you going to wait and question, and deliberate, and argue, while the Master stands by, saying, "Repent! believe! be baptized, and enter into life"? The power was given to the paralytic in the act of obedience. The power will be given to you in the same way. God works within you, and God helps those who help themselves straightway. *David James Burrell, The Golden Passional.*

Spiritual Health. Wilt thou be made whole? There is a way where there is a will; and nowhere else so much as in religion. If you have a yearning desire for something higher and nobler and better, this very desire is the call of God in your soul. It is the voice of Christ, saying to you "Wilt thou be made whole? Wilt thou be set free from thy sins?" *Henry Ward Beecher.*

III Bethesdas of To-day

Why our Bethesdas are Different. Let us praise God that we have no such Bethesdas in these days. You go to any of our hospitals and mark the cleanliness there. See the physician with his skill, and the nurses in their white aprons, with soft words, soft steps, and gentle touch: that is the Bethesda of Christendom to-day. O, there is an infinite gulf between Bethesda in Old Jerusalem and our hospitals! What makes it? Jesus has been walking in the porches all through the ages, and the hospital, which is peculiar to the charmed circle that we call "Christendom" is a fruit of the philanthropy of the historic Christ. He is the divine pattern of all the beneficence which distinguishes our modern civilization. *David James Burrell.*

Evidences of the Change. More is being done to-day to prevent and mitigate human suffering, to shelter and protect the weak and helpless, to minister wisely to the sick and wounded in body and in mind, than ever before in the history of mankind. Part of the evidence of this lies in some of the facts in connection with the humanizing of the law, and in the extraordinary story of the work begun by John Howard, a hundred and thirty years ago, which has cleansed away so much of the shame of a cruel, filthy, and irrational prison-system. But there is evidence, also, of a more direct and positive sort, going beyond the removal of ancient evils and manifesting a spirit of creative kindness eager to find new ways of helping others.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, says the best authority on statistics, charity has grown twice as fast as wealth in England, three times as fast in France. In the United States the amount of the larger gifts ($5,000 or more) rose from $29,000,000, in 1893, to $107,000,000, in 1901. The public and private charities of New York alone (excluding the money spent on buildings) are estimated at $50,000,000 a year.

With all this increase of money comes an equal increase of care and thought in regard to the best way of using it for the real benefit of mankind. Reckless almsgiving is recognized as an amiable but idiotic form of self-indulgence. The penny dropped into the beggar's hat gives place to an inquiry into the beggar's condition. This costs more, but it is worth more. Waste in money given is no more virtuous than waste in money earned. Schools of philanthropy are established to study and teach the economy of generosity. Asylums are investigated and supervised. Relief funds are intrusted to responsible committees, who keep books and render accounts. Men and women are trying to take the head into partnership with the heart in beneficence. *Henry van Dyke, Essays in Application.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The spirit of practical sympathy is a fruit of Christianity. *C. M. Alford.*

— I testify to what the good and strong have done for deprivation and infirmity. *Helen Keller.*

Expect great things from God and attempt great things for God. *Carey.*

Whoever thou art, whose need is great,
In the name of Christ, the Compassionate
And Merciful One, for thee I wait. *Whittier.*

He must be blind indeed who sees not in this Physician the divine Healer;

in this Christ the Light of the World; the Restorer of what sin has blighted; the Joy in our world's deep sorrow. *Edersheim.*

Major General Gordon, who at all times, everywhere, gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God. *Inscription on General Gordon's tomb.*

God doth justify the believing man, not for the worthiness of his faith, but for the worthiness of Him which is believed. *Richard Hooker.*

Look inward through the depths of thine own soul,
How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole? *James Russell Lowell.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4. 18, 19.

Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 7. 24, 25.

I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me. Phil. 4. 13.

Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good. Acts 10. 38.

Ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20. 35.

He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. Isa. 40. 29.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

How do I answer the question of Christ, "Wouldest thou be made whole?" Do I wish to be fitted for the highest life? Does my life show that I desire to be made whole?

"I do not want to possess a religion; I want a religion to possess me," said Charles Kingsley. If this is my earnest wish, too, then I shall know what it is to be made whole.

When Christ's commands come to me, bidding me rise and walk and carry out some needed task, do I obey at once, or do I say I can not, I have not the power, I must wait until I feel stronger?

I will ask God's help in what He seems to tell me are my duties, and I will have faith that I shall receive strength for them. I will find out what are the things I am failing to do because I have not the necessary will power, and with His strength I will resolutely try to do them.

When I see any one who is in trouble, what is my first impulse? Christ saw in every trouble a call to help.

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good." Christ waited not for opportunities, but sought them. We must not wait for some sufferer at the pool of Bethesda to call to us for aid, but we must seek him out and help him if we can. "What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult to each other?"

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The scene shifts from Galilee to Judea, and we find Jesus in Jerusalem in attendance at a national religious festival. As he was passing Bethesda, a pool of water fed by an intermittent spring near the sheep-gate, he stopped and looked with pity at a crowd of sick and crippled people there. In the covered porches facing the pool His eye rested on one who seemed the most wretched of all the sufferers, a man who had been helpless for thirty-eight years. Suddenly He approached and asked him a strange question—"Wouldest thou be made whole?" "Would I?" replied he. "Of course I would; but I have been here a long, long time, hoping to be cured by the water in the pool there. It is only when the spring bubbles up that the water is curative; I can not walk a step myself, and I have no one to carry me to the pool; I have seen man after man go down before me, and here I lie, disappointed and hopeless, for it is every man for himself here." Then came a command from Jesus stranger than His question; "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." By the question Jesus had sought to arouse the interest and confidence of the man, to awaken his desire for a cure, for He can not heal him unless he wills to be healed, and his will is inert, perhaps dead; by His command He tested his faith, his readiness to obey. With the command to exert himself, He gave the power to make the exertion, and immediately the man took up his bed and walked.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Every Christian congregation is a pool of Bethesda. All that gather here are somehow lame and halt and blind and diseased, and those most of all lame or halt or blind or diseased who know it not. *Lyman Abbott.*
2. The true Sabbath-day spirit.
3. The survival of the unfittest.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the account of the feeding of the five thousand in Matt. 14, Mark 6, and Luke 9. 2. What was the reason for the withdrawal to the other side of the Sea of Galilee? (Mark 6. 21–31.) 3. What have you already learned about Philip? (Lesson III.) 4. See Matt. 20. 2 for the purchasing power of a "penny" or shilling. 5. Last year in the story of Gideon how did you learn that barley loaves were valued? (Judges 7. 13.) 6. What does Mark say about the way in which the crowd was seated? 7. Look up the references in the Subject-Index of your Bible to the giving of thanks before meals. 8. What other miraculous supplies of food are mentioned in the Bible? Quails and manna, Ex. 16. 11–18; Elijah fed by ravens, 1 Kings 17. 2–6; by the widow, 1 Kings 17. 8–16; by an angel, 1 Kings 19. 4–8; the feeding of the four thousand, Mark 8. 1–9; the great draught of fishes after the Resurrection of Jesus, John 21. 4–13. 9. How had Jesus met the temptation to turn stones into bread for Himself in the wilderness? (Matt. 4. 3–4.) If He would not satisfy His own hunger by a miracle, why did He that of the multitude? 10. What are the seven miracles recorded by John? (Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6 (two), 9, 11.)

LESSON IX — MARCH 1

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

Golden Text

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. Isaiah 40. 11.

LESSON TEXT John 6. 5–14 TIME March, A. D. 29

5 When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?
6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.
7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.
8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,
9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?
10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.
11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.
12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.
14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

5. R. V., *Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat?*

6. This verse is parenthetical.

7. *Pennyworth.* R. V., *shillings' worth.* "The word in the Greek, δηνάριον, (Latin *denarius*) denotes a coin worth about eight pence half-penny, or nearly seventeen cents." R. V. note. Two hundred pennyworth, therefore, is about thirty-four dollars' worth. *Every one of them.* R. V., *every one.*

9. *Which.* R. V., *who. Small fishes.* R. V., *fishes. They.* R. V., *these.* Compare Mark 6. 38.

10. *And Jesus.* R. V., *Jesus. The men.* R. V., *the people. Sit down.* The Greek verb means recline. See Mark 6. 39, 40. *Much grass.* It was April, the time of the passover, verse 4. *Five thousand.* From Matthew 14. 21 we learn that there were five thousand men besides the women and children.

11. *And Jesus.* R. V., *Jesus therefore. When he had given thanks.* R. V., *having given thanks. He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down.* R. V., *he distributed to them that were set down. And likewise.* R. V., *likewise also.*

12. *When.* R. V., *And when. Said.* R. V., *saith. Fragments that remain.* R. V., *broken pieces which remain over.*

13. *Therefore they gathered them together.* R. V., *So they gathered them up. The fragments of.* R. V., *the broken pieces from. The five barley loaves.* The scantiness of the store is again told to emphasize the greatness of the miracle. *Over and above.* R. V., *over.*

14. R. V., *When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.* See Deut. 18. 15.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

9. *But what are these among so many?* Good men at a crisis which is at once a desperate situation and a high opportunity, sometimes say: "There is a lad here who hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but — ;" "but" — the whole emphasis is on that. "But!" O how many precious enterprises have been suddenly and basely concluded in mid-course by a faithless "but," "But what are these among so many?" Here is the blindness of arithmetical views of the forces and facts of religion. The moral necessity, however, will always outweigh statistics. What is the moral necessity? See it, as it springs forth in Jesus' life. In that eventide, on the shores of Gennesaret, with a hungry crowd of people who surged against Him at this highest moment of His popular activity, the disciples saw nothing else to do but to dismiss them. But the moral necessity, as yet unspoken, could not be dismissed. It was tugging at Jesus' heart. And soon there was manifested a sublime quality of the Christ and His religion. No figures of addition and subtraction dismayed Him. He would meet the crisis by spiritual multiplication. *Frank W. Gunsaulus, Paths to Power.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *A great multitude.* It was the passover season (verse 4), and they were on their way to Jerusalem. The crowd (people from the neighboring cities, verse 2) who followed Jesus by land around the Sea of Galilee had no doubt informed these pilgrims where Jesus was. The great concourse of people who annually make a pilgrimage to Mecca now has reminded travelers of what these religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem must have been.

7. *Two hundred shillings' worth of bread.* The denarius, which is translated *penny* or *shilling,* was the day's wages of a laborer at that time (Matt. 20. 2). Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie says that in some parts of Palestine it is still a laborer's hire, although in most places two to four times as much is paid.

9. *Barley loaves and fishes.* The Arabs to-day have the same "circles of bread," thin, flat loaves, round or oval in shape, which are always broken, never cut. Barley bread is still the chief food of the poorest people of Palestine, wheat bread being only for the rich. "Pliny and some of the Jewish writers describe barley as food fit for beasts," says Marvin R. Vincent. "Suetonius speaks of a turgid rhetorician as a barley orator, inflated like barley in water; and Livy relates how cohorts which had lost their standards were ordered barley for food."

The fish were not fresh fish, but were dried. The Greek word may be used for anything eaten with bread as a relish. "When the fellahin are on a journey

or out at work in the fields, they content themselves with dry bread eaten with a few figs, raisins, or such like, to give flavour to this otherwise tasteless fare," says Mr. Wilson. "The two little fishes which the lad, probably a shepherd-boy, had were two of the tiny, dried fish, plentiful then as to-day, and cheap enough for one even as poor as he to afford."

A Representation of the Loaves and Fishes, in the Catacombs at Rome

11. *Having given thanks.* It was the custom of the Jews to give thanks at the beginning of a meal. The words usually spoken were; "Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, the King of the world, who produced bread out of the earth."

13. *Baskets.* The baskets now used in the East resemble very much those which are represented on the monuments of Egypt. They are often like our own in shape, material and workmanship. The baskets here referred to were probably the ordinary traveling baskets which the Jews took with them on a journey. They carried their provisions in them so that they might not be polluted by eating the food of the Gentiles; and it is also said that they sometimes carried hay in them, on which they slept at night. Thus they kept aloof from the Gentiles in food and lodging. This will account for the contemptuous description which Juvenal gives of the Jews, when he represents that their household goods consisted of a basket and hay. *Freeman, Handbook.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

During the year that has intervened between our last lesson and this, Jesus has been in Galilee. To escape the multitudes who followed Him, Jesus one day crossed the Sea of Galilee to the uninhabited region on the northeastern shore of that lake. Here occurred the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The nearest town was Bethsaida Julias.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The prevailing unbelief of the Jews at Jerusalem became deadly hatred. Because it was the Sabbath day, they told the man who had been healed at the pool of Bethesda that it was not lawful for him to carry his bed, and he excused himself by saying that he was but obeying the word of the One who had cured him. "Who was he?" they questioned. The man could not tell then, but afterwards he saw and spoke with Jesus in the temple and then informed the Jews. They ignored the miracle, but persecuted Jesus for breaking their Sabbath laws. Jesus justified Himself: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Jews sought the more to kill Him, for now not only had He broken the Sabbath, but had called God His Father and made Himself equal with God. Jesus explained to them that sonship meant doing as His Father does, granting the gift of life to men, and judging them according to their use of that gift; for He is the source of life. There were four witnesses to His Sonship: that of John the Baptist, of His own works, of the word of God

in the conscience, and of the Scriptures. Yet after all these witnesses He was rejected by them because they would not believe in Him.

We must bear in mind that between chapter 5 and chapter 6 of John the greater part of the events of His Galilean ministry occurred as narrated in Matt. 12. 1–14. 12; Mark 2. 23–6. 29; Luke 6. 1–9. 7.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Our last two lessons have been about miracles, and to-day we study a third miracle. What was the miracle Jesus did for the nobleman? For the man at the pool of Bethesda? What is the miracle in our lesson to-day? What is a miracle? The word comes from a Latin verb which means *to wonder.* A miracle is always wonderful, full of wonder, but it is far more than this. You know that a few grains of wheat planted in the earth will grow and produce enough wheat to make bread for five thousand people; this is very wonderful, we can not understand how it takes place, but we do not call it a miracle. It occurs every day; it is one of the laws of Nature, we say, that seeds put into the earth shall produce roots and stalks and leaves and fruit. The laws of Nature are laws of God which are always in operation. When Jesus broke five loaves of bread into enough pieces to feed five thousand people He performed a miracle. One little, flat loaf of bread such as they make in Palestine would hardly be enough for one hungry man; and five loaves could not naturally feed five thousand men. This miracle differs from the wonderful growth of wheat in being brought about, not according to the laws of God which are so common that we call them natural, but by His special will for this special time and place and people. It was God's will because it was Christ's will. A miracle is always something wonderful, and it is always brought about by God's special will for a special purpose. It always proves that God is working through the one who does a miracle.

For Older Pupils. The miracle of feeding the five thousand is the only miracle which is recorded by all four Evangelists. The Synoptic writers give the occasion for the withdrawal to the coast of Bethsaida on the other side of the sea, which John omits. The news of the death of John the Baptist had saddened the hearts of all, and the disciples had but lately returned, weary and worn, from their first tour on which Christ had sent them. They were all in need of rest and quiet communion one with another, and yet the people crowded around them so that "they had no leisure so much as to eat." Very tenderly Jesus said to His disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." They reached the desert place, but they found not the quiet and rest they longed for, for the people observed the direction in which the boats were going and followed on foot around the head of the lake. Whether the disciples rebelled at this intrusion we know not, but when Jesus beheld them we are told that "He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things."

Again and again in the Gospel records we see how Jesus' plans were interrupted, but we never find Him disturbed thereby. Is a Christian character more severely tested by some great trouble, or by the many little interruptions and annoyances of daily life? Is it possible readily to sacrifice half a day's time in some good cause one day, and the next to become very irritable over

an unexpected interruption that consumes half an hour's time? A German writer's time was full to overflowing, when a needy visitor called and delayed his work of pressing importance. From that loss of his time, however, he gained many things, he tells us; a little more patience, a little more willingness to wait for what he wanted himself, a stronger belief in the value of self-giving, a fuller faith that God could use his time better than he could, and a fresh proof that there is more peace in self-denial than in selfishness.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Miracles of Jesus

The Signs in the Gospel of John. The word *sign* occurs seventeen times in John's Gospel for *miracle*. In the thirtieth and thirty-first verses of the twentieth chapter, John says: "Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." The signs which John selects to prove that Jesus is the Christ are seven in number: the changing of water into wine, the healing of the nobleman's son, the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on the sea, the giving of sight to the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. If John had given his definition of a "sign" it must have read something like this: "A sign is an extraordinary event brought about by Jesus for the purpose of proving that He is commissioned by God, that He is the Messiah."

Another term used by John for miracles is *works*. The term is significant of his thought, "As though the wonderful were only the natural form of working for Him who is dwelt in by all the fulness of God; He must, out of the necessity of His higher Being, bring forth these works greater than man's."

Because Expressive of His Mercy, His Miracles prove His Messiahship. Just because the primary purpose of the miracles was to give expression to God's mercy and not to prove His Messiahship, on this very account they can be appealed to as evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. The poet writes because he is a poet, and not for the purpose of convincing the world that he is a poet. And yet his writing does convince the world that he is a poet. The benevolent man acts precisely as Christ did when He laid His finger on the lips of the healed person and charged him to make no mention of His kindness; and therefore all who do come to the knowledge of it recognize Him as a charitable person. Actions done for the purpose of establishing a character for courage or compassion are much more likely to establish a character for vanity and love of display. And it is just because the primary intention of Jesus' miracles was, not to establish a character for this or that, but directly to help needy persons and so give utterance to God's love, that they do convincingly prove Him to be the true King of the new kingdom. Accordingly Jesus does not scruple on occasion to appeal to His miracles: "For the works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me;" "Though ye believe not Me, believe the works!" *Marcus Dods*, in *The Biblical World*.

II What God can do through us

Power from on High. Now, whenever God calls a man to a special work He empowers him for that work. God never will send you to warfare at your own charges. I suppose if Dr. Barnardo had seen in a vision five thousand boys and girls depending upon him for bread and butter, for garments and training, he would have said, "Lord, it isn't possible. I am a medical student; I have no means; I have few friends; I can not. Send by the hand of him by whom Thou wilt send, but I can not." Nevertheless when God called him to that work, for that work God empowered him. If ever there was a man that might rightly have made an excuse to get away from the divine call, I think it is Moses. I think Moses might have made an almost unanswerable argument — I mean from the human standpoint — to God's call. When God said to him, "Go down and thou shalt deliver My people," Moses might have said this: "O Lord, do you know how long I have been in the wilderness here? Forty years. And do you know why I am here? Because forty years ago I tried to deliver one Israelite from one Egyptian, and I have stayed here forty years on account of it, and now you tell me to go down there and fetch two million of them out. It is an impossibility." A good argument. A good deal better argument, my brother, than you probably have for your call to duty. But you remember what God said, "Lo, I am with thee." God wasn't with Moses when he struck that Egyptian dead forty years before that. Moses then ran in his own strength and made bare his own arm, but now God says: "Now my time has come. Lo, I am with you, and this shall be a sign. On this mountain," that was beetling over Moses' head at the time, "at the foot of this mountain with all Israel you shall worship Me." God and Moses are more than Pharaoh and all his hosts: God and Moses are omnipotent because God is omnipotent and dwells in Moses and empowers him. And so it will be with every one of God's children. According to the call that God gives you for service, so He will give you power for your service. *A. F. Schauffler,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

Examples of Power. Consider the mighty works that God has wrought through the hands of man. Think of the great influence of thousands of Sunday-schools scattered over the world. How did that begin? In the efforts of poor printer Robert Raikes to teach the ragged children of Gloucester. Think of the beautiful charity which carries vast multitudes of little ones every summer out of the crowded city into the fresh air of the country. How did that begin? In the attempts of a country minister to bring a score of poor children to spend a few days in the farm-houses of his scanty parish. What can we do? Nothing. What can God do with us? Anything: whatsoever He will. *Henry van Dyke.*

A Parable. I pluck an acorn from the greensward, and hold it to my ear; and this is what it says to me: "By and by the birds will come and nest in me. By and by I shall furnish shade for the cattle. By and by I shall provide warmth for the home in the pleasant fire. By and by I shall be shelter from storm to those who have gone under the roof. By and by I shall be the strong ribs of the great vessel, and the tempest will beat against me in vain, while I carry men across the Atlantic." "O foolish little acorn, wilt thou be all this?" I ask, and the acorn answers, "Yes, God and I." *Lyman Abbott.*

III Being Proved

The Proving of Philip. Jesus asked Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat?" and John explains that Jesus asked this question merely to prove Philip. How did the question prove him? Have you ever been asked a question which showed your ignorance, an ignorance of which you were not aware? Has a question ever brought to your mind a duty which you had not seen before, and by your failure afterwards to fulfil that duty have you been proved to yourself to be less of a Christian than you thought? Philip had now been with Jesus for some time. Perhaps he was with Him at Cana when He turned the water into wine for the wedding guests. Had he seen in this miracle only His Master's power to do this one thing, and failed to grasp the thought that He could meet every need? Or does He think that Jesus will work a miracle only for an important occasion? Has he sympathy himself for the hungry multitude, or does he see in them only a lowly rabble unworthy of Jesus' love and sympathy and care? Both his knowledge and his heart were tested, and proved at fault. He calmly calculated the amount of money it would take to buy bread for so many, and said they could not be fed.

We are Proved for our Good. James Russell Lowell said once that he thought he could be almost a perfect Christian if he were always a visitor in the home of some hospitable friend. "I can show a great deal of self-denial," he says, "when the best of everything is urged upon me with kindly importunity. It is not very hard to turn the other cheek for a kiss." Our poet did not mean that he would in reality be almost a perfect Christian under such conditions, but only that he would seem to be one when nothing occurred to try his temper or prove his spirit. It is not when the ship stands on the stocks that you know how strong or how weak it may be; it is when it has been launched and tried by wind and wave, when it has been put to the test. Fortunately for us all, we are members of families, not honored guests all our lives, and the friction that comes from every-day life with others, whether in our home or school or place of business or in society, is a means of developing our strength of character. Robert Browning rightly interprets all life as

"Just a stuff
To try the soul's strength on, to educe the man."

It is a very commonplace remark that this life is but a training for the never-ending life to which we are going, but if we always kept this fact in mind we would not so often fail to profit from the events which try our soul's strength, and some sides of our character which are the weakest would now be the strongest. Every trial borne makes us stronger for the next one that comes to prove us, every temptation met makes us the readier to withstand the next one. Again the poet Browning is our teacher: —

"Was the trial sore?
Temptation sharp? Thank God a second time!
Why comes temptation but for man to meet
And master, and make crouch beneath his feet,
And so be pedestaled in triumph?"

A Purpose of God in Everything. I was a poor boy and a cripple. One day, standing on a ball field, I was watching the other boys with bitterness and envy. They were strong, healthy, well-clothed, and well-fed. Some of the

mothers of the players sat in carriages, waiting to see the game, intending to drive their sons home when it was over. I looked at them with an angry scowl, sick at heart. A young man standing beside me, and seeing, no doubt, the discontent in my face, touched my arm.

"Say, bub! You wish you were in the place of those boys, eh?" he said.

"Yes, I do!" I broke out. "Why should they have everything, and I nothing?"

He nodded gravely. "I reckon God gave them money and education and health to help them to be of some account in the world. Did it never strike you that He gave you your lame leg for the same reason — to make a man of you?"

I did not answer and he turned away. I never saw him again. But I couldn't get his words out of mind. My crippled leg — God's gift? To teach me patience and strength?

I did not believe it. But I was a thoughtful boy, taught to reverence God, and the more I thought of it the more it seemed to me the stranger had told the truth. I did believe that God pitied me — and at last came to feel that it would please Him if I rose above my deformity, and by it was made more manly and true. It worked on my temper, my thoughts, and at last upon my actions. Gradually it influenced my whole life. Whatever came to me, I looked upon as God's gift for some especial purpose. If it were a difficulty he gave it for me to struggle with, to strengthen my mind and faith; if it were a helpless invalid cast on me for support, or even a beggar, I thought,— God has given me another chance to do His work.

The idea has sweetened and helped all of my life. I wish I could find the man who gave me this password which has lifted my life to a higher plane, and has led me constantly to the Source of all good. *Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The tests of life are to make, not break us. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

The question is not, What can you do? but, What can you and God together do? *Lyman Abbott.*

Christ never indulged in emotions which did not lead to work. *Maclaren.*

It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything. *Phillips Brooks.*

Yield thy poor best and ask not how or why,
Lest one day seeing all about thee spread,
A mighty crowd and marvelously fed,
Thy heart break out into a bitter cry:
"I might have furnished, I, yea, even I,
The two small fishes and the barley bread." *Frederick Langbridge.*

Behind the snowy loaf is the mill-wheel; behind the mill-wheel is the wheat-field; on the wheat-field rests the sunlight; above the sun is God. *James Russell Lowell.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. We are God's fellow-workers. 1 Cor. 3. 7, 9.

And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4. 19.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God. 2 Cor. 3. 5.

For thou, O God, hast proved us;
Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Psa. 66. 10.

Give us this day our daily bread. Matt. 6. 11.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Philip's faith in his Lord's power was tested. How would I stand such a test?

Christ was "moved with compassion" for this multitude of people, but He was not content to stop with this. We never read of His being sorry for any one without also helping that one. There is danger that we may take credit to ourselves for our compassionate feelings, but make no effort to bring relief to those whom we commiserate. An emotion indulged in which does not lead to action not only fails to aid the object of that emotion, but weakens our own wills as well. Our spiritual life is at a low ebb if we feel no responsibility ourselves for the sufferings of others.

The more we share our spiritual blessings with others the greater they become.

This miracle shows the limitless patience and love of Jesus, and His care for human wants, and is symbolical of His eagerness to satisfy men's deeper spiritual natures.

It is one thing to ask God to help us in our plans; it is quite another thing to ask God how we can be helpers in His plans. Every man is glad to have God's help; only now and then is a man found whose first thought is how he can help God. What is your chief desire in your morning prayer for the day? Your honest answer to that question may reveal to you your spirit and purpose in life. *H. Clay Trumbull.*

When Luther was passing a field of growing wheat he fell on his knees and prayed: "It is nothing but a miracle, O Lord, that thou bringest wheat forth out of the earth. Dear Father, help us, Thy children, to receive with gratitude our daily bread." I will no longer accept God's gifts ungratefully because they are so common.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

In our last lesson Jesus was in Jerusalem, but nearly a year has been spent in Galilee since then. At the passover season He and His disciples were greatly in need of rest, and they crossed by boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to escape the people. They ascended a mountain there and were quietly talking when they saw a great multitude coming toward them. The people had watched the course that the boats took and had followed on foot around the head of the lake, and their numbers had been increased by pilgrims who were on their way to Jerusalem. At once Jesus thought of their hunger in this desert place, and turned to practical, matter-of-fact Philip with the question where they could buy food for them. He asked this, not because He Himself did not know what He would do, John explains, but because He would

prove Philip. Perhaps He wished to impress Philip with the ludicrous insufficiency of their own supplies, or would cause him to see His own lack of sympathy with the needs of the multitude in contrast with His Master's thought for them, or it may be that He was testing Philip's faith in that Master. Philip answered that it would take two hundred shillings' worth of bread to provide even a little for each one. In order to combine the accounts in all the Gospels, it is supposed that Jesus put this question to Philip in the morning, as the crowd approached, and then, after Jesus had taught them all day, Andrew came to Him at evening and told Him that there was a lad there who had five barley loaves and two fishes; "But what are these among so many!" he exclaimed. "Make the people sit down," commanded Jesus. Wondering much, the disciples obeyed, and the five thousand expectant men, besides the women and children, sat down in orderly groups; in "garden plats," Mark tells us, as the word he uses literally means, for seated cross-legged in their bright colored garments they appeared like so many brilliant flower-beds. After offering thanks to God, Jesus broke the loaves and fishes into portions and distributed them through the disciples to the people. After all had eaten, He bade the disciples gather up the broken portions that remained, and they filled twelve baskets, far more in quantity than the original five loaves. No wonder the people were greatly impressed. Was not this the prophet that they had been looking for? In their excitement they would take Him by force to make Him their King, but the temptation to become a temporal King He had met and conquered in His own wilderness experience, and perceiving their thoughts He escaped from them.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The two principles involved in the miracle. The first is the principle of continuity, that what is to be must come to be by an enlargement, a development, a change and growth of old things; and the second is the principle of economy, that nothing, however little or poor, is to be wasted. *Phillips Brooks.*

2. The educational methods of the Great Teacher.

3. While the spiritual needs of men are the chief needs that must be met by the Church, the satisfaction of their physical needs should not be left to the practical sympathy of those outside the Church.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. When was the discourse of Jesus in the next lesson delivered? (John 6. 59.) 2. What resemblance can you see between this discourse and Jesus' words to the woman of Samaria? 3. With verse 34 compare John 4. 15. 4. Copy all the verses in the sixth chapter of John in which Jesus refers to Himself as the Bread of Life. 5. Tell the story of the giving of the manna in the wilderness, one of last year's lessons. (Ex. 16.) 6. Look up the texts in which Jesus is proclaimed the light of the world. See the Subject-Index of your Bible. 7. Where in John is Jesus called the Bread of Life? (6. 35); the Light of the World? (8. 12); the Door of the Fold? (10. 7, 9); the Good Shepherd? (10. 11, 14); the Resurrection and the Life? (11. 25.); the Way, the Truth, and the Life? (14. 6); the True Vine? (15. 1, 5). 8. Which one of the Beatitudes does this lesson recall? Which one of Jesus' temptations?

LESSON X — MARCH 8

JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6. 26–37. (Read John 6. 22–51.) Commit vv. 32, 33.

Golden Text

Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. John 6. 35.

LESSON TEXT John 6. 26–37 TIME April, A. D. 29

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

26. *Jesus answered them.* He answered not their question in verse 25, but referred to their desire to find Him (verse 24) which prompted the question. *The miracles.* R. V., *signs.* The "signs" were miraculous proofs of His divine mission; they had seen them only as marvels, had not recognized their spiritual meaning. *Did eat.* R. V., *ate.* They followed Him for the sake of the temporal blessings which His marvelous power seemed to promise them.

27. *Labor.* R. V., *work.* It is the same verb as in verses 28 and 30. Compare Matt. 6. 28, 31. *Meat.* R. V., *food.* The command does not mean that they should not provide for their bodily needs, but that they should not be so occupied with this that they failed to provide for their more important spiritual needs. *But for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.* R. V., *but for the food which abideth unto eternal life.* The satisfaction of their true need is lasting. *For Him hath God the Father sealed.* R. V., *for him the Father, even God, hath sealed. Sealed.* Attested. See 3. 33. "By giving the Son the miracle of the previous day and other signs to do, the Father has

Pacific Bible S
4835 East Anaheim
Long Beach

sealed or authenticated Him as the Giver of that which nourishes life everlasting." *Dods.*

28. *Then.* R. V., *therefore. What shall we do that we might work.* R. V., *what must we do, that we may work. The works of God.* The works pleasing to God. They think of certain definite works which are the condition of receiving "food which abideth."

29. There is only one work which God requires; it is the principle underlying all rightful works, namely, belief in Him whom God has sent. "This is the Christian answer to a Jewish question."

30. *What sign shewest thou.* R. V., *what, then, doest thou for a sign. Then.* Since He claimed to be the One whom God had sent. *What dost thou work?* R. V., *what workest thou?*

31. *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert.* R. V., *our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness. From heaven.* R. V., *out of heaven.* The rabbis said, "Like the first redeemer (Moses) will be the last redeemer (Messiah); the first made manna descend, so the second shall make manna descend as it is written," Psa. 72. 16; 78. 24; Ex. 16. 4. In their thought the Messiah must prove His claim by exceeding Moses in power; Moses gave bread day after day from Heaven for forty years; Jesus gave them bread but one day, and it had not come from Heaven.

32. *Then Jesus said.* R. V., *Jesus therefore said. Moses gave you not that bread from heaven.* R. V., *It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven.* It was not Moses, but the Father, who gave the manna; the manna was out of Heaven, but it was not the true bread out of Heaven; you have not that manna to-day, but the true bread may now be yours.

33. *He which cometh down from heaven.* R. V., *that which cometh down out of heaven.* See 3. 13. *Unto the world.* Not to "the fathers" alone, verse 31.

34. *Then said they.* R. V., *They said therefore.* Compare the similar figurative words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman and her request, John 4. 15.

35. *And Jesus.* R. V., *Jesus. I am the bread of life.* See verses 48, 51, 58. Coming to Jesus and believing on Jesus are synonymous terms. "If there is a difference, the coming probably refers to faith on its active, the believing on its passive side; while the satisfaction of the hunger relates to strength of will, and the relief of the thirst to peace of heart." *New Century Bible.*

36. *I said.* This may be a reference to verse 26, or to some unrecorded saying. *Believe not.* R. V., *yet believe not.*

37. *That.* R. V., *that which. All that which the Father giveth me.* "Was it not natural for Jesus at this hour to fall back on the eternal purpose of His Father as that which, notwithstanding all the disappointment and unbelief He was experiencing, should be carried out? His mission was divinely ordained; and it lay not in man's unbelief or opposition or indifference to thwart its success." *Reith. Him that cometh.* "The giving, God's act; the coming, man's." *Reith.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

29. *That ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* On Him, not on a set of propositions embodied in creeds, or articles, or confessions. If the faith were to be put in these you might master them and put them aside just as the school-boy when he has mastered the rules of arithmetic or grammar. When

Copyright, J. J. Tissot

Ye Seek Me for the Loaves—*Tissot*

they are learnt they are done with. But it is not so with faith in persons; that must be kept alive by thought of them, by communion with them, by affection going out to them. Let these be neglected and the faith dies down or becomes inoperative over the heart and life. And it is thus with Jesus Christ. We can not master a series of propositions about Him and put them aside. We can not make an analysis of His character and feel that all is done. This is the work of God — the work He lays upon us — that we believe on Him whom He hath sent. *Garrett Horder.*

36. *Ye also have seen me, and believe not.* There may be a seeing of Jesus which does not result in believing. Jesus had shown sufficient proofs to these Galileans that He was come from the Father to save them. But they desired a King to fight for them, not a Saviour to save them from their sins. They desired temporal mercies; they cared less for spiritual. Hence they saw Jesus, but their eyes were blinded by earthly possessions and they did not believe; they did not desire to believe. Their case is not singular. We see in Jesus what faith and spiritual sympathy enable us to see, and no more. Jesus assured them that the sign asked for had been given; Himself the object and the evidence of both; the Father's seal on Him being His own power and guarantee to satisfy their spiritual needs. But they did not care for such a sign. They wanted, as men want still, something over and above Jesus as a proof of His divine mission and claims; they wanted, besides, the promise of good here, and the spiritual world might be left out of account. *George Reith.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

27. *Sealed.* Some see in this expression an allusion to the custom which bakers had of stamping their bread with their name; according to others, it refers to the seal which a master might give his steward when authorizing him to provide a feast. *New Century Bible.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the evening the disciples started alone for Capernaum in their boat. The wind blew fiercely. When they had gone more than half the distance across the lake they saw Jesus walking toward them on the sea. They were afraid until He said to them, "It is I; be not afraid." The astonished disciples received Him in their boat, and ere long they reached their destination. Jesus gave His discourse about the Bread of Life in the synagogue at Capernaum.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you like to read the continued stories in the *Youth's Companion* or some other paper? Are you always eager to know how the story will end? To-day we have the ending of last Sunday's story, and it is far more full of interest than is the ending of any story you ever read. Let us quickly review the story as we studied it a week ago. What was the great lesson which we learned from it? What was the lesson which the people themselves learned? They saw in it only Jesus' power to satisfy their hunger. When they found Jesus, what question did they ask Him? What was Jesus' answer? When had Jesus said to two of His disciples, "What seek ye? (Les-

son III.) These disciples, Andrew and John, were seeking Jesus for spiritual food. Do you know what is meant by "spiritual food?" In the East it is very common to speak of eating or drinking any good thing in the sense of enjoying it. Just as meat and vegetables are food that strengthens our bodies, so we say that the words of Jesus are food that strengthens our spirits. Jesus had wished the people to see in the barley loaves and fishes that He gave them a sign that He was able to give them spiritual food as well, but they had failed to see this.

For Older Pupils. At Jerusalem Jesus was rejected; the people refused to come to Him as the Messiah; and in chapter 5 John gives Jesus' words telling them that their duty toward God was summed up in believing on Him as the One sent from God. In Galilee they came to Him in great multitudes; but they came with mistaken ideas of what the Father had sent Him to do, and they sought from Him temporal rather than spiritual life; in chapter 6 John gives Jesus' words telling them the nature of the life He would give, life eternal. The special verses chosen for to-day's study present the spiritual application of the great miracle studied last week.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Cupboard Love

What it meant to Christ. Christ's second temptation which came from the people was keener than His first from the devil. He had found the people in the desert and had fed them. He had had compassion upon them, for they had been with Him a long time and they had nothing to eat; and He had fed them — fed them apparently with nothing to feed them with, fed them till they were satisfied and basketfuls were left over. It was a great risk He ran. And He need not have run the risk. He could have sent them away, and they could have gone into the villages and got food for themselves. He knew the risk He ran. He knew that they would misunderstand it and would tempt Him. They tempted Him at once. They came and offered themselves to Him. They offered to follow Him whithersoever He went. Well, He had come to win them. He had come to seek and to save the lost — just such as they were. And it was a keener temptation than the devil's. For they offered themselves in love. But their love was only cupboard love. "Ye

Jesus multiplying the Bread. From a Painting in the Catacombs at Rome

seek me because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." Jesus has often been offered cupboard love. Men seek Him because they have eaten of the loaves, or because they hope to eat. May not the love for the loaves turn into love for the Giver of them? "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." But cupboard love is not love, for the best of it is selfishness, and where self is there love is not. "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself." It was a real temptation, because He had come to seek and to save that which was lost. And when the lost were coming to Him in crowds, hoping to be fed, hoping to be clothed, hoping to be done with toil and pain and be at rest, He had to send them away with an offer of rest for their souls. He looked upon them and loved them as they went away sorrowful. And He knew that the time was not far off when He must go up to Jerusalem. *The Expository Times.*

Wrong Motives may prove Right Starting-points. There may be much that is false and mixed in the considerations which cause men to crowd about Christ. "For Jesus' sake only" is to live the saintly life out of love, gratitude, enthusiasm; to feel that in Christ's life is the highest model, in His love the strongest motive, in His work the grandest calling; to live to Him in the spirit of trust, love, and sacrifice, asking for nothing beyond. But many attachments are imperfect. Numbers swell the congregations of Christendom who are not there out of pure love and devotion. Intellect is there because Christ can satisfy some of its hunger. Fashion is there because Christ has acquired social credit. Taste is there because Christ reveals a certain ideal of ethical loveliness. Prudence and policy are there in thousands, not because Christ is truth and love and righteousness, but because in His hands are the loaves and fishes, and they who follow in His train eat and are filled.

These imperfect attachments may be allowed as starting-points in the Christian life. The people in the text are not condemned for coming to Jesus with mixed intentions; for indeed the religious life often begins with adulterated ideas — men start from very low grounds indeed. One is charmed with the intellectual promise of Christianity; another is tempted because a Christian life associates us with excellent people; whilst others think of the material advantages which follow in its train. Here men may start. Christ recognizes these starting-points. They are not the highest considerations, but they are legitimate as far as they go. They are accepted. So Matthew Henry says, "God makes the best of the green ears of wheat." What a good thing that He does,— that He is pitiful to the immature, the crude, and the imperfect. He makes the best of the green ears, and so by and by they become golden ears in His garden.

But the imperfect attachment can only be allowed as a starting-point. The true condition is that in which we love God with a true heart, in which we love Christ because of what He is, and love goodness because it is goodness. *William L. Watkinson, Studies in Christian Character.*

What we seek. Victor Hugo's Valjean tells the same great truth. You recall that when Jean turned in at the Bishop's gate he was merely begging bread. Unkempt, unloved, unashamed of his filthy rags, driven from the dog-kennel into which he had crawled to sleep, asking no larger gift than a crust and a corner alone, he had come to the friendly door. The Bishop would have been good enough, according to Jean's standard, if he had merely honored the petitioner's importunate appeal and given him plenty of bread. And when

Jean made off with the Bishop's plate he was simply taking a little more of what, in his cynical heart, a Bishop was good for. That, however, was not the end of the story. The Jean Valjean who stands forth in the later pages of the book, one of the finest characters in all the range of fiction, had found a new use for the Bishop. He had appropriated somewhat more than bread and meat. He had discovered forgiveness to be diviner than pity. He had touched Heaven in the good old man's tenderness. And he came from that second audience a new creation. . . .

I can remember when my mother seemed to me the embodiment of useful graces. If a garment was torn, I turned to mother. Had the school day gone wrong, I confided it to my mother. Was I headsick, or heartsick, mother knew what to apply. I could not imagine how any lad could live at all without his mother. But only as I came to turn to her for more than bread and favors; only as I began to feel the domination of her gracious, beautiful life; only as I learned to call on her for the replenishment of my wasting courage and the reinvigoration of my trust in God did I begin to know what it meant to have — and lose — a mother. Oh, boys who have your mothers still, let them do something for you besides minister to your comfort and cook the things you like. You do not know the value of a mother until you let her help you be more pure and true and strong.

And so I come back to our view and use of God. There are times when we come to Him for the silver quarters He gives. There are times when we treat Him as the Schoolmaster who makes us learn our lessons. There are times when we come cringing to Heaven's gate for the crusts and creature comforts of God. There are times when we set our faces toward Him for the smoothing of our hard couches and the lightening of our pain. But the occasions on which we turn to Him for the things He loves best to bestow — an inward grace, a royal courage, an inspiration divine — are far too few, I fear. We have barely learned that God means aught besides bread. *George Clarke Peck, Old Sins in New Clothes.*

II Faith a Work

The Christian Answer to a Jewish Question. Christ had been telling these Galileans to work, not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat that abideth unto eternal life. This command was somewhat vague — it specified the objects they were to avoid and those they were to seek; but it did not tell them how they were to attain the meat that abideth unto eternal life. They naturally asked, What must we do that we may work the works of God? They had been trained in a system in which every detail of life had been marked out — what they were to do, what they were to leave undone, what things were forbidden, what things were enjoined. When such men heard Christ use the word work, they naturally asked, What must we do? specify for us the details of the labor. And He to their utter astonishment replies, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. It sounds like an evasion of their question — like no answer at all. In reality it both answered their question and corrected their mistake. They expected a plan for their life — a detailed manual. Christ gave them an object for their faith, which would transform their nature so that they would have a law written on their hearts, instead of a code of regulation in their hands. Do this one work

— believe, and out of it all other works will grow. Let the seed of faith get rooted in the heart, and from it all the fair fruit of the spirit will spring.

Work is too often thought of as belonging only to the visible realm, as being wrought by hand or limb. Brain labor, heart labor, is often more intense, more exhausting than hand labor. Faith is indeed a work — perhaps the hardest work of our life. It has to wrestle with unbelief, to resist the insidious attacks of doubt. We have to "hold fast our confidence," our faith, as St. Paul says. Men often speak of faith as if it were the easiest of all things to be obtained; as if they had only to be passive and it would be wakened in their hearts. It is neither wakened nor sustained without inward spiritual labor. *Garrett Horder.*

What does Faith in Christ mean? "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved," said Paul to the jailer who cried, "What must I do to be saved?" An oft-quoted definition of faith is this: "Faith is an act by which one person, a sinner, commits himself to another Person, a Saviour." What does this word "commit" mean? You are in need of a physician's help and you go to him and say, I commit myself to your care. The physician tells you to take a certain medicine. "O no," you answer, "I believe in you, I am trusting myself to you, but I will not take your medicine." Does he think that you committed yourself to his care as you say? You say that you believe in Jesus Christ, you have committed yourself to Him as your Saviour. Christ bids you follow Him, He says that He is the Way, the Truth, the Light. "O no," you answer, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, I have accepted Him as my Saviour, and I am trusting Him to save me from my sins. This is what faith means, it is a passive state, it requires no action on my part, I do not need to follow Him and try to pattern my life after Him, all I need to do is to trust His word." Will Christ think that you have faith in Him as you say?

There are two aspects to our Christian faith, and we are in danger of remembering only the one. Faith in Christ is the acceptance of certain truths in regard to Him, and is an act of the intellect; it is also committing oneself to Him in perfect loyalty, and endeavoring to follow His teaching and example, and is an act of the will. An eminent minister has said that "Faith in Christ is this: Such as He is I want to be; His is the kind of character I want to possess; His is the kind of life I want to live; His is the kind of blessedness I desire for myself and for others." True faith in Christ can mean no less than this, for if we believe in Him we believe in His life and His teaching, and this is what He has taught, that we are to follow Him, take His yoke upon us, do His will. "A man may believe what creed he will, yet if this is not in his heart he has not faith in Christ. The mere vision of a Christ without the vigorous attempt to reproduce the Christ, is sentimentality in religion, and we are not saved by sentimentality."

During the Civil War a man brought a vest to President Lincoln which he claimed was bullet proof, and he wanted the President to order such vests for the soldiers. "Put on the vest," said Lincoln, "and stand off and let a man fire at you with a rifle. If your vest stands this test, I will consider it." The man was unwilling to submit to the test, and no more was heard about his invention. If we have faith in Christ we shall not only be willing but eager to prove it by putting Him to the test, "taking up the whole armor of God that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."

III I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

The Meaning of Christ's Words. The nurture of the soul by the communicated life of God — that is what Christ is talking of. . . . The whole expression is figurative through and through. The figure is very vivid and graphic, so clear and sharp that it sometimes seems as if there were no figure there; as if it were the statement of the baldest material fact, but it is figurative nevertheless. And the general spirit of the figure is clear; it means a certain kind of strength. It is strength incorporated, not strength applied. There is the strength of the buttress which sustains a tower, or of a rock on which the tower is set. That is outward strength. There is the strength of food which supports the man by becoming the man. That is inward strength. And that is the sort of strength which Christ promises in the gift of Himself. . . .

You feed on the cornfield and then go and build your house, and it is the cornfield in your strong arms that builds the house, that cuts down the trees, and piles the stone, and lifts the roof into its place. You feed on Christ and then go and live your life, and it is Christ in you that helps the poor, that tells the truth, that fights the battle, and that wins the crown.

But what is this strength of Christ that comes to us? There can be only one answer: It is His character. There is no strength that is communicable except in character. It is the moral qualities of His nature that are to enter into us and be ours because we are His. *Phillips Brooks.*

Spiritual Life is not Self-sustaining. How long can a man live without food and water? He can not sustain himself, his strength and his very life must be sustained by the food he eats. It is just as true that his spiritual life can not sustain itself. Many people live as though they thought religion a luxury, cake instead of bread, as Henry Ward Beecher expresses it, and they cut their cake into small pieces to be passed around when there is company instead of treating it as common bread to be used every hour.

Merely reading over a certain number of verses in the Bible daily without appropriating to oneself their meaning is not feeding on the word of God; one must be able to say with an aged Chinaman, "My heart ate up the good news as I read."

Our table may be bountifully supplied with food, but if we merely look at it, admire it perhaps, but do not taste it, it can do us no good. There is a certain diseased condition of the body which sometimes prevents the food taken from being turned into flesh and blood, and a sufferer from "insufficient nourishment" may die no matter how much food he eats. The Bread of Life is not Bread for us unless we "take and eat," and His strength has not become our strength unless it shows itself in deeds that are Christlike.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Faith is the root of all good works; a root that produces nothing is dead. *Wilson.*

The wheat field supports the body, but it does this in the hope that the body will support the soul. *David Swing.*

To believe on Christ is initial faith; to receive Him is appropriating faith;

to understand Him is intelligent faith; to assimilate Him is active faith. *Cornelius Woelfkin.*

Begin every morning with fervent prayer, and breakfast your soul on God's glorious, infallible, inspiring Book. *Theodore L. Cuyler.*

He who feeds on Christ becomes Christlike, as the silkworm takes the hue of the leaves on which it browses. *Alexander Maclaren.*

I am accustomed to regard the moral and the spiritual in the light of a diet, or daily bread, which only then becomes daily bread when I make it my rule of life, and never lose sight of it the whole year round. *Goethe.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Matt. 4. 4.

The life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment. Luke 12. 23.

Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart. Jer. 15. 16.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good. Isa. 55. 2.

Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved. Acts 16. 31.

Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good. Psa. 34. 8.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Am I like that Galilean multitude, living only for this life, caring only for the good things of a life which I know will perish, or do I earnestly covet the things which abide unto eternal life?

Christ saw the selfish motive of the people. He knew that they sought Him only for the loaves and fishes they hoped to receive from Him. He can read my motive in seeking Him. What do I expect to receive from Him?

What must I do that I may work the works of God? This is the work of God, that I believe on Him whom He hath sent.

I will seek to have such a faith in Christ that I shall not only trust Him but shall loyally obey Him.

If my character is not growing more and more like Christ's character, it must be because I am either not taking or not assimilating the Bread of Life. I will no longer starve my spiritual life.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The multitude whom Jesus had fed saw the disciples go away without Him in the only boat there. Many remained over night, and the next day because the disciples had not returned nor had Jesus appeared, they left for Capernaum in boats which had arrived during the night from Tiberias. They found Jesus at Capernaum before them, and in their astonishment said to Him, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" Jesus did not satisfy their curiosity, but He made it clear to them that He understood them through and through, that He knew they were following Him for the loaves and fishes, in the hope that He would free them from the need of toil to sustain their lives, and not because they

had seen in His miracle of yesterday the sign of His power to feed their souls. Then He urged them to work, not merely for the food that perishes, but for the food that abides, the food that sustains that life in them which never dies. This better gift the Son of man had power to give, God Himself had set His seal upon Him as the Bringer of salvation. Impressed by Jesus' earnest words, and willing to fulfil the condition they think necessary in order to have a repetition of the miracle, they ask what work they shall do,—what sacrifice or giving of tithes, they mean—that shall be pleasing to God. "Believe in Me," is Jesus' answer. The one great work acceptable to God is faith in the Son. "Well, then, since you ask us to believe in You as God's messenger, give us Your credentials, a sign proving Your authority," they return. "Moses gave manna in the wilderness, the Messiah should show a greater sign than Moses, and Your sign of yesterday was less marvelous. Your bread came not from Heaven like the manna. And it came only once, not daily for forty years."

"You think the manna was given by Moses," said Jesus, "but it was given by God. It was bread out of Heaven, but not the true bread which my Father gives. The bread of God is that which comes out of Heaven and gives life to the world, not to a few only."

As the Samaritan woman, when offered the gift of God under the figure of living water which quenches thirst forever, asked eagerly for it, so these people of Galilee asked for this same gift when presented to them under the figure of bread that lasts forever. Solemnly then Jesus proclaimed His great truth, that He himself is this great gift: "I am the Bread of Life. I will satisfy the soul hunger and soul thirst of every one that comes to Me and believes in Me."

Jesus then warned them that they had seen Him and still believed not. Though they came not in faith, yet others would come, for God's purpose in sending Him would not be thwarted; He would not cast out any one who came to Him, for He had come from Heaven to do God's will.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The doctrine of Justification by Faith as proclaimed by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans.

2. The popularity of Jesus and the reaction that followed.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the intervening chapters. 2. What does Acts 3. 2 tell in regard to beggars? 3. After Paul's shipwreck how did the people on the island of Melita show that they believed a special calamity to be the result of a special sin? (Acts 28. 1–6.) 4. How did Jesus repudiate this idea? (See Luke 13. 1–5.) 5. From which one of the Commandments did the Jews get their belief that a man suffered from the sins of his parents? (Ex. 20. 5.) 6. Why did Jesus make use of such a remedy? 7. In what other miracles of restoring sight did He merely touch the eyes? (Matt. 9. 27–31; 20. 29–34.) 8. Compare the means used in the cure of the deaf-mute. (Mark 7. 33.) 9. What calamity did Jesus say took place in order that the Son of God might be glorified thereby? (John 11. 1–4.) 10. Tell the story of Bartimaeus. (Mark 10. 46–52.)

LESSON XI — MARCH 15

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

John 9. 1–12. (Read John 9.) Commit vv. 10, 11.

Golden Text

I am the light of the world. John 9. 5.

LESSON TEXT John 9. 1–12 TIME December, A. D. 29

1 And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.
2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?
3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.
4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.
5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.
7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed and came seeing.
8 The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?
9 Some said, This is he: others *said,* He is like him: *but* he said, I am *he.*
10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?
11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.
12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Jesus.* R. V., *he. Passed by.* The miracle may have been wrought as Jesus was leaving the temple to escape His enemies (8. 59), but probably it was on another day. See verse 14. In harmonies of the Gospels the events narrated in Luke 9. 51–10. 42 are placed between John 8. 59 and 9. 1.

2. *Master, who did sin.* R. V., *Rabbi, who sinned. This man or his parents.* It was the prevalent belief that a special calamity was the result of some special sin. "We suppose that they wish to induce the Lord to pass by the man as unworthy of His self-sacrificing interest, in order that He may hasten on: and that hence their question, uttered on the spur of the moment, derives a decided Pharisaical coloring from the popular notion." *Lange.* "That the punishment was anticipatory of the man's sin, or that the question was one of sheer bewilderment, putting all conceivable possibilities, but without attaching any very definite meaning to the one branch of the alternative, seems to fit the mental attitude of the disciples. That the man suffered for his parents' sins was an idea which would naturally suggest itself. Ex. 20. 5." *Dods. That he was born blind.* R. V., *that he should be born blind.*

3. *Neither hath this man sinned.* R. V., *Neither did this man sin. Nor his parents.* Supply, that he was born blind. No one's sin was the cause

of the blindness. *But.* Supply, he was born blind. *That the works of God should be made manifest in him.* "Within the larger circle, namely, that evil is made to serve God's purpose at last, and that all things work together for good to them who love God, there is the lesser circle of Christ's activity, from which He felt that all merely accidental was excluded." *Reith.*

4. *I.* R. V., *We.* The disciples as well as Jesus. *Day* and *night* are here figurative for *life* and *death. The works of him that sent me.* John 3. 16, 17; proofs of God's love and mercy. Compare John 11. 4.

5. *As long as.* R. V., *When. I am the light of the world.* See John 8. 12. The miracle He was about to perform on the eyes of the blind man was typical of His power to give spiritual sight.

6. *And he anointed the eyes of the blind man.* R. V., *And anointed his eyes.*

7. *Wash.* His eyes. This command tested his faith. *Which is by interpretation, Sent.* The Greek word, Siloam, is derived from a Hebrew root meaning "sent"—the Evangelist deems the name appropriate in this event. *His way.* R. V., *away.*

8. *They which before had seen him that he was blind.* R. V., *they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar.* Compare Acts 3. 2, 10.

9. *Some said, This is he.* R. V., *Others said, It is he. He is like him.* R. V., *No, but he is like him. But He said.* R. V., *He said.*

10. *Therefore said they unto him.* R. V., *They said therefore unto him. How were.* R. V., *How then were.*

11. *A man. R. V., The man. To the pool of Siloam.* R. V., *to Siloam. And I went.* R. V., *so I went away.*

12. *Then said they.* R. V., *and they said, He said.* R. V., *He saith.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. *Who sinned, this man or his parents?* Nothing can exceed the cruelty, or even the absurdity, of such a verdict, for on the one alternative it means that the man was punished for a sin he never committed, and on the other, that since he was predestined to be a great sinner God punished him before his sin was actually committed, on the principle of the schoolmaster who thrashes his pupils regularly because he concludes that if they do not deserve punishment to-day they certainly will do so to-morrow. Yet cruel and absurd as such a temper is, there is one thing not to be overlooked; it is the ineradicable moral instinct which leads men to connect penalty with wrong-doing. Let men say what they will, all men have a certain instinct that the Power which rules the universe is just; that moral cause and effect run through all the world; that no wrong-doing on the part of the humblest, committed in the most absolute secrecy, or covered by what seems the most complete effacement of time, can or does escape punishment. *W. J. Dawson, The Reproach of Christ.*

6. *He anointed his eyes.* Why all this to-do — this stooping and making clay with spittle, this anointing and instructing to wash in the pool of Siloam? The doctors assure us this treatment is not a cure for blindness; our hearts equally assure us that Christ could not be guilty of affectation.

So far from solemn and meaningless trifling, the action was deliberate and charged with highest interest. He would give sight inner as well as outer, the sight that is love as well as the sight that is light. So he stoops and labors

and caresses and speaks. The man is to feel that graciousness of service, even repulsive service, done for him; to feel the touch of those fingers, the pressure of that hand, to feel the charm of the voice which spake as never men spake, and last, while throbbing with the joy of such a contact, to feel the magic of obedience and faith in the ordered walking and washing. *Walter Friend.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *A man blind.* Blindness is far more common in eastern countries than it is with us. Dr. Geikie says that while in northern Europe only one out of a thousand persons is blind, in Egypt there is one blind in every hundred, and he attributes it largely to inflammation arising from the great changes in temperature between day and night. Perhaps there is no land where blindness is so common as in Palestine. Water is scarce in many districts and cleanliness is wanting. Dirt and flies aggravate eye diseases. Travelers often speak of seeing flies settled undisturbed on the sore eyelids of children. Even eye diseases that are easily curable often lead to blindness because of neglect and of the prejudice which exists against reliable remedies, for the people much prefer to use incantations. Professor Curtiss visited a shrine in Palestine that is especially good for the eyes. "The saint is an oculist," he says. "A man who has trouble with his eyes takes a cock, cuts off its head, puts a drop of its blood in each eye, gives the cock to some poor person, and his eyes get well!"

6. *He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay.* Saliva was often used in incantations. Dr. Vincent quotes from Persius that a nurse "takes the babe from the cradle, and with her middle finger moistens its forehead and lips with spittle to keep away the evil eye." Some Protestant scholars see in the Roman catholic priest's touching with saliva the ears and nostrils of an infant at baptism a survival of this ancient custom.

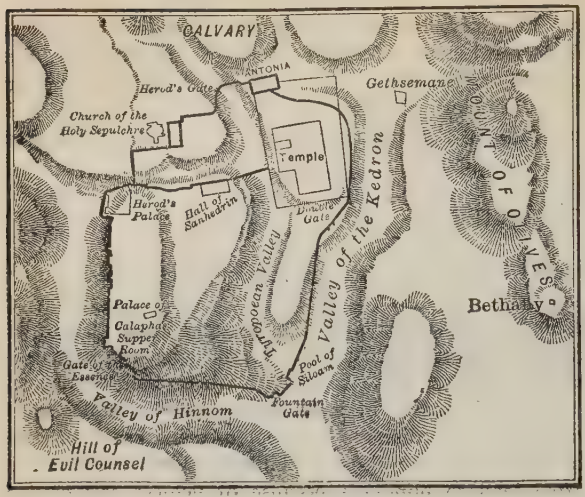
It was popularly believed that saliva and clay would cure weak eyes, but not that it would affect the eyes of one born blind. In other miracles of healing the blind Jesus did not use it (Mark 10. 46), but in this case and in Mark 8. 22–26 He used it to help the faith of the blind man. "It is easier to believe, when means can be perceived; it is still easier, when the means seem appropriate."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

It was in the spring that Jesus gave His discourse to the multitude about the Bread of Life. Since then He has been into the region of Tyre and Sidon, over to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, on to the neighborhood of Cesarea Philippi, upon Mount Hermon, back to Capernaum, southward to Jerusalem, northward again to the border of Samaria, into Perea, to Bethany, and once more to Jerusalem. Let us locate these places on our maps. The healing of the man born blind occurred in the city of Jerusalem. The Pool of Siloam where the man bathed his eyes is in the southeast, in the oblong space outside of the wall, as the diagram shows. Through a subterranean channel the water from the Fountain of the Virgin flows into this pool.

Notice that the plain south of the Pool of Siloam is the union of three valleys which radiate northward. What is the name of each?

Library of Pacific Bible Seminary



Jerusalem in the Time of Christ

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Jews murmured because Jesus said that He was the Bread that came out of Heaven; Jesus solemnly renewed His claims that through faith in Himself only could everlasting life be attained. Many of His followers deserted Him, but when Jesus asked the twelve if they, too, would leave, Peter answered for them: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God."

After a long period in Galilee, Jesus went to Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. The people knew that the rabbis had sought to kill Him, and yet He taught openly in the Temple and no one seized Him. The officers sent by the Sanhedrin to arrest Him had returned confessing that they could not, for "never man so spake." The whole nation was interested in Him; some believed in Him; the deadly enmity of the chief priests and Pharisees increased.

They brought to Jesus a sinful woman and asked Him what should be done to her, expecting that He would either uphold their laws of death by stoning and thus come into conflict with the civil power, or advise a milder course, and be charged with opposing their own laws. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," was His answer, and they all left.

Again Jesus spoke to the multitude concerning Himself. In the treasury of the Temple He proclaimed that He was the Light of the world. He warned them against the consequences of their unbelief — "Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." After talking about true freedom and spiritual sonship, He proclaimed His divine sonship and pre-existence in these words, "Before Abraham was, I am." This so incensed the Jews that they took up stones to cast at Him, but He escaped and left the Temple.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Should you ever go to Mexico you will want to visit its cathedrals, but no matter at what time of the day you approach the buildings you will have to pass a sorry looking group of beggars. At times of special celebrations the beggars line the streets for some distance away. Some of them are lepers and have only stumps of hands which they hold out in supplication, some are misshapen and crippled, very many are totally blind, and one and all they cry out as you come near, "For the love of God, give me a centavo." We know that in Palestine in the time of Christ such sufferers sat outside the temple and the synagogues and begged for alms. One day Christ stopped in Jerusalem to speak with a beggar who had been blind from his birth.

For Older Pupils. It seems to us a strange question which the disciples asked Christ as they stopped before a beggar who was born blind — "Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" and yet stranger seems Christ's answer,— he was born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." A striking comment on these words comes from a story in a juvenile paper. At the request of a patient a minister was present at an operation, and the surgeon said to him, "Who did sin, this woman or her parents, that this disease has come upon her?" "Neither did this woman sin nor her parents," returned the minister, "but that the works of God should be made manifest in what you are doing for her relief, and perhaps in other ways which we can not understand." Afterwards as the patient was recovering at the hospital, she said to her minister: "I have lived a good life, as the world counts goodness, but here in the hospital surrounded by the sick and unfortunate, I realize how little I have thought of others, and I have been asking myself how I can make this experience the means of good. Will you not join me in my prayer of thanksgiving to God for the years now added to my life, and pray that those added years may be filled with more unselfish thought for others?" When the minister told the surgeon his patient's words, the latter said, "The Lord's answer to my question was the right one. The works of God are manifest."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I One Thing I know

Whereas I was Blind, now I see. The blind man was right. "Whether this man meets the requirements of your theological conceptions," said he, "I know not. But one thing I do know, that whereas I was once blind, now I see." His was the testimony of experience.

How may you know it? There is only one way. Not by standing outside the throng there with the critical scribes and Pharisees and asking: "Is this Elijah?" "Is it one of the prophets?" "How can it be that this is the Christ?" Not that way, but by reverently and earnestly wending your way into the circle of the twelve, sharing in His life and spirit. Go and live with Him. Go for a week and be like Him, "full of truth," absolutely sincere in word and deed and thought. Go, if only for a day, and be like Him, "poor in spirit," thrusting back pride and arrogance. Go, if only for a few short hours, and count yourself of "no esteem"; be absolutely unselfish. That is the best way to "learn of the doctrine." Then you will say with Peter and the twelve, "Thou art the Christ. To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." *Charles B. Macfarland.*

There must be Clouds in the Spiritual Atmosphere. A faithful German minister who for thirty years was the manager of an asylum for imbecile children said that he had lost his delight in the thought of Heaven and its joys, for never for a moment were the faces of those idiot children absent from his waking or sleeping thoughts. A successful evangelist once confided to a friend that he could count on his fingers the number of times that he had felt the wonderful joy of believing in Christ, but "though I can not always see Him I know He is there, and I go on with my work," he added. Why should we always expect to feel the joy of faith, always expect to live our spiritual lives on the heights? Astronomers tell us that there are only a very few days in the year when the

atmosphere is clear enough for the most delicate astronomical observances; there may be only a very few days in the year when there is no sign of a cloud in our spiritual atmosphere.

"John Bunyan in his wonderful story of the life of a man who tried to reach Heaven, tells us that the pilgrim only twice had glimpses of the heavenly hills. The rest of the time he plodded on his hard way steadily, as he was bidden to do."

In what Way the New Life will be manifested. A peculiar law suit was once held in France. Monsieur Jean Paulin had died leaving an estate in Brittany that was claimed by two young men from Canada, each of whom had sent on papers proving his birth and right to the estate. It was known that Jean Paulin had an only son in Canada, but no one in Brittany had seen him. One of the young men arrived. He answered every question correctly, showed a perfect familiarity with M. Paulin's life and opinions and thoughts, but in his own person bore no resemblance to him. Then the other young man came, and his case was won for him before the trial began, for every feature of his was that of M. Paulin. There was his figure, his laughing blue eye, the kindness and good will which all the neighbors knew so well, that beamed from his face. The *Youth's Companion* tells the story of the suit and thus wisely comments:

"This anecdote emphasizes the fact that a man's parentage in body and soul is generally apparent to the world about him. Suppose he has professed openly to have chosen God for his Father. He may have certificate of membership with a church; he may be perfectly familiar with Christ's words and works, and quote them fluently and incessantly; but if he is a son of God there will be some likeness to his Father in his nature, his actions, and his thoughts. The likeness may be feeble and poor enough, perhaps, but it will be real. No discerning man will mistake it. The self-deceived and the impostor do not possess this test of kinship with God, though they may chatter volubly of His doctrines and work; but in the words and thoughts of the true son shines always some gleam of the mysterious life given to him by his Father."

II The Night cometh when no Man can work

A Fact we do not realize. The Noble Loyalists who were imprisoned by the revolutionists in 1792, with the courage of their race and class tried to meet death calmly, even gaily. They felt assured that their time was close at hand. Only a few of them, to be sure, were given to the mob, but beyond stood the relentless guillotine, to which the Revolutionary Tribunal was condemning them by the scores, every day.

So they watched and waited, wondering who would be called next. From time to time a small iron door in the wall silently opened, and a messenger of the commune called a name. A man in the prime of life, or a boy, or a gray-haired, tottering woman rose and followed him, turning on the threshold for a last look behind. Then the door closed, and the victim returned no more.

On the second day, the record states, some of the prisoners began to write upon the wall their last words, hoping they would be read by their friends, or speak for them to the world when they should be gone.

Are not we all now in this bright, bustling world in the condition of the prisoners of La Force? We are together at work, weeping or singing, or pray-

ing, and from time to time a door opens and a messenger beckons and a name is called, and one of us passes out and returns no more.

True, we do not realize, as did the victims of the Terror, that the respite is but for a moment, and that even now the messenger may be at the door to summon us.

But though we may be unconscious that we are doing so, each one of us, too, is busy writing some message on the wall. It will last when we are gone. It is the meaning of our lives, whether it be a gay song or a vicious falsehood or a prayer. We do not know when the door will open for us and our name be called. What is it that we write? *The Youth's Companion.*

The Value of becoming Familiar with the Fact. Of course we should not spend our whole life watching for its end. That would be the worst way to prepare for it. The school-boy who spends his school hours thinking of recess is a poor laborer, as well as the workman occupied all day long in counting the minutes that separate him from the evening. Like them he loses his time who spends it in fruitless contemplation of death. It would be especially unhealthy for the mind of youth to be invaded by mournful preoccupations and to have its soul dulled by a constant representation of the last hour. Youth ought to be the time of joy, of free gaiety, and of long hopes.

It is not a bad idea to become familiar with the fact that we shall not stay forever on the earth, and I do not think it necessary to wait for old age to remember death. Since every one knows that old age is an exception, it is well to consider it while we are young.

He who thinks at times that his days are numbered is disposed to utilize them better. The words of Jesus come to him: "Work while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man can work." The thought of death makes him a better man. He watches more scrupulously his conduct toward those who live near him, thinking that perhaps he will not always have them. . . .

Let us accustom ourselves in early life to the idea that we must go away, and let us play our part bravely, without having our good nature spoiled or our enthusiasm for work diminished. Then, if the moment comes to stop, it does not prove that what we have done in this world is in vain, not that we should lightly value these days that will end. What we have begun here will have its successor and its to-morrow. If a man resigns himself to death, he is not permitted to resign himself to nothingness. Death is a stage of progress, it is not the end. God's will for us is infinite. Nothing that comes from God can vanish into nothingness. *Charles Wagner, On Life's Threshold.*

III I MUST WORK THE WORKS OF HIM THAT SENT ME, WHILE IT IS DAY

Through Thoughts on Death Christ leads to Thoughts on Life. Christ never pictured death as a skeleton with relentless scythe. He rarely discourses on the thought that life is short. And when He asserts the fact that all men see, and most men dread, He is careful not to pause there. He is not satisfied with leading us to thoughts on death; He strives through them to lead us to thoughts on life. He speaks of mortality to make us think of vitality. He gives us minor music in serious, not melancholy, strains. You feel their fine and lofty sadness, but you notice also that they are courageous. We can not dwell too much on Christ's thought of the brevity of life. This makes it always present, never obtrusive. Seen all the while it would make men sad; felt all the while

it makes them faithful. The Egyptians at their feasts passed around a human skull, that the revelers might be reminded that death, an uninvited guest, was very near. Christ appears at all our feasts of joy, proclaims that the end of the earthly is dust and ashes, but the end of man in the earth is eternal life. Thus He makes us not less joyful, but more reasonable. He teaches us that time is short. He never teaches that there is any virtue in saying, "I must die soon." He would have all men in a natural, earnest way realize the fact of death that they may also realize the fact of life. *C. M. Lamson.*

The Preciousness of Time. There is scarcely any other word of Jesus that makes us realize more forcibly His Humanity than His word about the shortness of time. "We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day." What a strenuous life Jesus led, the Gospels, brief as they are, have shown. The thought seemed constantly with Him that "His hour" was coming shortly, and He was eager to do His Father's will while here on earth.

Over the mantel in his Brattleboro home Rudyard Kipling had these words inscribed, "The night cometh when no man can work." On the side of his desk Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock pasted the reminder, "Do it now." "'So much to do, so little done; good-by," were the last words of Cecil Rhodes, the great financier of Africa.

A missionary meeting was held in Tremont Temple, Boston, not long ago, and among the missionary delegates was one who forty years before had left the comforts of his New England home for the pioneer mission work in the far West, on the islands of the Pacific, and among the Indians of Alaska. His salary had never exceeded three hundred dollars a year, and a large share of that had gone to the people among whom he worked. As soon as the meeting was over he started for the station to return to his beloved work. Friends had remonstrated with him in vain. "Surely after forty years of such a self-sacrificing life you will remain and give yourself a little rest and your friends the pleasure of seeing you," they said to him, but with a gentle smile he answered all: "I have not time. I am an old man, and there is so much to do. And I am so grateful that I have a little more life to give to the work which God has given me to do."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Whether natural or spiritual, the eyes that look are the eyes likely to see. *Christina Rossetti.*

Though the eyes be sealed against sun and moon, he is not blind who sees Christ. *Christina Rossetti.*

The first thing to consider in life is the end of it, its highest and ultimate design. *W. L. Watkinson.*

Our solace in suffering is that the Man of Sorrows is sure to walk that way. *Sunday School Times.*

Death is the price we pay on earth's green sod
For God's free gift to live and work with God. *J. S. Blackie.*

Man has only one day of life—to-day: he did live yesterday, he may live to-morrow, but he has only to-day. *Wm. George Jordan.*

Not so encompassed by the night are they
Whose sealed eyes ne'er look upon the day,
As those who view the miracle of morn,
And hold the Marvel-worker's name in scorn. *Clinton Scollard.*

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8. 12.

Man goeth forth unto his work
And to his labor until the evening. Psa. 104. 23.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men. Gal. 6. 10.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
Wondrous things out of thy law. Psa. 119. 18.

What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? John 9. 17.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

In the words of the fourth verse Christ gives the general principle that instead of seeking to know the mystery of what God intended by calamities, we should seek to learn what God calls us to do in regard to them.

As there are blind beggars in the East who would on no account have their sight restored and be forced to earn their own living through toil, so there are those in our land who are content to be spiritually blind rather than be troubled by the sense of duty to others which would come with their spiritual sight.

Christ felt the need of diligence in God's service because His time on earth was short. We live as though we expected to live on this earth forever.

The blind man could not tell how he received sight, but he was certain that he had received it. We may not tell how we have received salvation, but we may be certain that we have received it.

When Death closes the gate between this world and the next, he never opens it to let any one return. What are we doing in the brief time that is ours on this side of the gate? As Jesus was about to pass through He could say in His farewell prayer, "I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do." When that time comes for me, can I say that I have accomplished the work my Father gave me to do here?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

As Jesus was going along the streets of Jerusalem, he stopped by a blind beggar. His disciples recognized the man as one who had been born blind; they saw in him only a "case" to speculate over. They believed that each particular disease or affliction came to a man because of some particular sin. "Rabbi," they questioned, "who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus rebuked their belief by telling them that the man was not blind because of any sin either he or his parents had committed. It is in abolishing evil that the work of God is shown. Jesus saw in this man a brother to be helped, an opportunity to make manifest the works of God, and a reminder of the shortness of time yet remaining in which He could fulfill His mission on earth. "We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day," He told His disciples: "The night cometh, when no man can work. When I am in the world I am the Light of the World."

Then spitting on the ground and making clay He anointed the man's blind eyes and bade him wash off the clay in the pool of Siloam. Jesus did this, no doubt,

to let the man feel His ministering touch, to arouse his faith, through the use of means commonly employed for weak eyes, and to test his obedience. The man obeyed, and returned seeing.

So marvelous a cure occasioned a tumult among all who had known him. "Is this he that sat and begged?" "Yes," said some; "No," said others, "but he is like him," for his opened eyes had naturally changed his appearance. "I am he," the man affirmed, and when they asked him how it was that he could now see he told them what "the man that is called Jesus" had done. "Where is He?" "I know not."

They brought him before the Pharisees, and to their questions he gave the same answer. Because the miracle was wrought on the Sabbath, some of the Pharisees said Jesus was a sinner, but others said, "How could a sinner do such a miracle?" They asked the man what he thought of Jesus, and he answered that He was a prophet. Then they examined his parents. His parents feared these Pharisees, who had threated to excommunicate any one who should confess Jesus to be the Christ, so they merely said that this was their son who had been born blind, but now could see, but as to how he received his sight he, who was of age, alone could tell them. Once more they examined the man. "Confess what we know, that Jesus is a sinner," they adjured him. "Whether He sins against your theological creeds I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see," he stoutly maintained; they attempted to cross-examine him again, but his patience was exhausted and he sarcastically asked why they wished to hear his story over again; would they become Jesus' disciples? "We are Moses' disciples, we know that God spake unto Moses, we know not from whence this man is." "Why here is a marvelous thing that ye know not whence He is," retorted the man. "If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing." "Dost thou teach us?" they angrily exclaimed, and cast him out of the synagogue.

Later, Jesus sought and found the man and made Himself known to him as the Son of God, and the man believed and worshipped Him. Thus the poor blind man instead of the penny for which he sat begging, received the great gift of eye sight and the far greater gift of spiritual sight. Jesus' comment upon him and upon the Pharisees was that He brought sight to those who, like this man, realized their need of Him, and increased the blindness of those who, like the Pharisees, believed not in Him, nor in their need of a Messiah.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The connection between sin and suffering as portrayed in the Book of Job.
2. What human nature would become if there were no suffering in the world.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Ask pupils to read the first nine chapters of the book of John through at one time. Let them review the titles and golden texts of the lessons in order, and do whatever special work you may select for Review Sunday.

REVIEW

Golden Text for the Quarter

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. John 1. 4.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE FIRST NINE CHAPTERS OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

(A suggestion. Let each of the twenty sections below be committed to memory by a pupil, and on Review Sunday let the twenty pupils together come before the school and recite in order the paragraphs learned.)

Lesson I. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not. A man sent from God bore witness of the Light. This man, John, was not the light; the true Light was in the world, giving light to every one, but the world knew Him not. He came to His own people and they would not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God. Those who believe on Him have a spiritual birth which is of divine, not human, origin. The Word became flesh and dwelt on earth; the Evangelist and others had seen His glory.

John bore witness that He who came after him in time was before him in influence. Of His grace we have all received. The law was given through Moses; grace and truth, through Jesus Christ. No man has seen God, but His Son has declared Him.

The Jews sent priests and Levites to John to find out who he was; John declared that he was not the Christ. "Art thou Elijah?" they asked. "I am not." "Art thou the prophet?" "No." "Who art thou, then, for we must answer those who sent us." "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord."

Lesson II. "What right, then, have you to baptize?" these delegates from the Pharisees asked. "I baptize in water," answered John, "but One whom you know not is already come, He is my authority, even the One whose shoe latchet I am unworthy to unloose." It was in Bethany beyond Jordan where John was baptizing that these questions were asked. The day after John saw Jesus approaching, and he cried out, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I have been speaking. The One who, though coming after me, was in reality before me. I knew Him not at first, but to prepare for His coming I have been baptizing in water. He who sent me to baptize in water made known to me that the One upon whom I should see the Spirit descending and abiding, was the One that baptizes in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove upon Him, and I have borne witness that He is the Son of God."

Lesson III. The third day John was talking with two of his disciples

when he saw Jesus passing, and again he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The two disciples at once followed Jesus. "What seek ye?" Jesus asked, and they asked in answer, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?" "Come, and ye shall see," was Jesus' invitation, which they accepted. It was the tenth hour and they remained with Him over night. In the morning they hastened away to bring others to Jesus. John found his brother James, but Andrew was the first to find his brother Simon and to tell him that he had found the Messiah. Simon returned with Andrew, and Jesus said to him, "Thou art Simon, the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (Peter)." The day after on His way into Galilee Jesus saw Philip and bade him follow Him. Philip sought Nathanael. "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth," he joyfully exclaimed. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth!" scornfully questioned Nathanael. "Come and see," returned Philip. They came to Jesus and Nathanael received a strange greeting; "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." "Whence knowest thou me?" asked the surprised Nathanael. "Before Philip called thee, I saw thee under the fig tree." "Thou art the Son of God," returned Nathanael. "Thou art the king of Israel."

"Believest thou because I saw thee under the fig tree? Thou shalt see greater things: the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," declared Jesus.

Jesus and His disciples attended a wedding in Cana of Galilee. His mother was there, and when the supply of wine gave out she came and told Jesus, probably expecting that He would show His power, but Jesus reminded her that He was obedient to a higher will than hers. Mary told the servants to do whatever Jesus commanded. He bade them fill the water pots with water, and then pour it out and carry it to the ruler of the feast. Greatly surprised at the superior quality of the wine he thus received, the ruler of the feast told the bridegroom that, contrary to the usual custom, he had kept the best wine till the last. This sign of Jesus' power convinced the disciples that He was the Messiah. From Cana Jesus went with His mother and brethren and disciples to Capernaum.

Lesson IV. From Capernaum He went to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the passover. There He gave His disciples good reason for recalling one of the Psalms which said, "Zeal for Thy house shall eat Me up." Jesus found His Father's house desecrated. He made a whip of cords, and drove out the sheep and oxen which were in the temple court for sale, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and commanded the sellers of doves to take them away. "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise," were His indignant words. When the Jews asked Him for a sign to prove that He had authority to do what He had done, Jesus gave them a sign which was to be fulfilled at the end of His life. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," were His words. He referred to the temple of His body, and after the resurrection His disciples recalled this saying. The Jews did not understand Him, and they said contemptuously, "This temple was forty-six years in building, will you raise it up in three days?"

Jesus wrought many miracles in Jerusalem during this feast, which caused many to believe in Him, but He knew how fickle the people were and did not trust them. One of those impressed by His miracles was Nicodemus, a Pharisee, and a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus at night, eager to learn more from Him. "Rabbi, we know from Thy mir-

acles that Thou art a Teacher come from God," were his words of greeting. Jesus knowing that Nicodemus wished to learn about the Kingdom of God, of which he was sure he was a member merely because he was a Jew, told him that only those who were born anew, born of the Spirit, could be its members. Just as mysterious as the coming and going of the wind, which can not be seen, is the effect of the Spirit of God upon men, He told him. "How can these things be?" questioned Nathanael. "Art thou the teacher of Israel and understandest not these things?" was Jesus' rebuke. Then He told him about Himself. He alone knew about heavenly things because He alone had come down from Heaven.

Lesson V. He was the Revealer of the Father, and would become the Saviour of the world, for, like the brazen serpant lifted up by Moses in the wilderness for the salvation of the Israelites from death, He was to be lifted upon the cross for the salvation of all from eternal death. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. God sent His Son to save the world, not to judge it, but in not accepting Him he that believes not judges himself. He whose deeds are evil shuns the searching rays of light; he whose deeds are good comes to the light, that they may be seen to have been wrought in God.

Jesus and His disciples remained in Judea for a time and baptized the people. The disciples of John the Baptist were jealous for their master's influence, and told him that "all men" were going to Jesus. John reminded them that he had already told them he was not the Christ; that his joy came in seeing Jesus' popularity; Jesus' influence would increase while his own would diminish.

To avoid any seeming rivalry with the Baptist, Jesus left Judea for Galilee. On His way across Samaria He stopped at Jacob's well near Sychar to rest. A Samaritan woman came there to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. She expressed surprise that He, a Jew, should ask water of her, for Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus told her that if she but knew the Gift of God and who He was who was speaking to her, she would ask Him for living water. He had no rope, the well was deep, where could He get His living water, was He greater than Jacob? the woman wonderingly questioned. Whoever drank of that water before them would thirst again, Jesus told her, but the one who drank of the living water He could give would never thirst. The woman asked for the water, though she knew not what Jesus meant, and to show her her need of His spiritual gift, Jesus bade her bring her husband. She replied that she had none, and Jesus told her that she had had five husbands and was now living with one who was not her husband.

Lesson VI. This knowledge of her life made the woman exclaim, "I perceive that Thou art a prophet." If a prophet, He could tell her where was the right place in which to worship, whether at Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim, and pointing to the mountain before them she referred to this long-standing controversy between Jews and Samaritans. Neither in Jerusalem nor on this mountain alone shall the Father be worshipped, Jesus told her. The Samaritans knew little about God whom they worshipped; the Jews knew much, and through them salvation must come. The time had already come when true worshippers should worship God as He wishes to be worshipped, in spirit and truth, for God is Spirit. When the Messiah came, the woman remarked, He would explain all

things. "I that speak unto thee am He," was Jesus solemn announcement to her. The return of the disciples from the city interrupted the conversation. They wondered greatly that Jesus was speaking with a woman, but no one ventured to question Him. The woman left her waterpot in her haste to tell the people of Sychar about Jesus. "Come and see a man who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?" she excitedly said to them.

Meanwhile His disciples besought Jesus to eat, but He only answered, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "Hath any man brought Him aught to eat?" they asked each other, but Jesus explained that His "meat" was to do the will of God and finish His work. Seeing the people coming toward Him, Jesus told His disciples that though they said harvest time was four months off, the fields were white already for harvesting.

The Samaritans begged Jesus to remain, and for two days He labored among them. Many who had at first believed because of the woman's testimony, now declared that, having heard Jesus themselves, they knew that He was indeed the Saviour of the world.

Lesson VII. Jesus continued His way to Galilee and was at first gladly welcomed by the Galileans. Because they had seen the miracles which He did at the passover in Jerusalem, they welcomed Him; had it not been for His miracles, they would not have received Him, for, as Jesus Himself had said, a prophet has no honor in His own country. At Cana a nobleman came to Him, and begged Him to go to Capernaum and cure his son who was dying. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe," said Jesus to him and the Galileans. "Come down ere my child die," importuned the nobleman. That was not necessary, Jesus told him, but his son should live. The nobleman had faith enough in Jesus to believe Him, and he started back to Capernaum. On the way he met servants coming to tell him that his son was well, and when he learned that the recovery took place at the very hour in which Jesus had foretold it, He believed on Jesus, as did all his household.

Lesson VIII. When Jesus was again in Jerusalem attending a national feast, He saw a multitude of sick, blind, lame, and infirm people begging in the porches that surround the pool of Bethesda. To a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years Jesus said, "Wouldest thou be made whole?" The man complained that he had no one to put him into the pool when the waters were troubled (when the spring bubbled up), for at that time, he thought, he would be cured if he were only in the pool. Jesus bade him arise, take up his bed and walk. Strength at once came to the man, and he did as he was told. This miracle of healing took place on the Sabbath day.

The Jews, therefore, told the man that it was not lawful for him to carry his bed on the Sabbath. He that cured him had commanded him to do so; the man explained. "Who is He," they asked, but the man could not answer, for Jesus had left the scene. Jesus saw him later in the temple and counseled him to sin no more, and he then reported to the Jews that it was Jesus who had cured him. They persecuted Jesus because He did this on the Sabbath. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work," Jesus told them, and they then sought to kill Him because He claimed to be equal with God.

Jesus told them of His relation to the Father — He was beloved of God and He did whatsoever God had shown Him; of His relation to men — He had the power to give them life eternal, and He was their Judge; of the

nature of the testimony in His behalf — of John the Baptist, of the Father, through the works He gave His Son to do, through His words in the Scriptures, and through His voice in the conscience; and of His rejection by the Jews.

At the time of the passover, about a year later, Jesus crossed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, and a great multitude followed. Climbing the mountain, He sat down with His disciples to rest.

Lesson IX. When Jesus looked up and saw the multitude approaching, He asked Philip where they could buy bread for so many. He knew what He would do, the Evangelist explains, but He would prove Philip. Philip said that it would take two hundred shillings' worth of bread to give a little to each. Andrew told Jesus that a lad had five barley loaves and two fishes — "but what are these among so many!" he exclaimed helplessly. "Make the people sit down," Jesus commanded; and the five thousand sat on the grass while Jesus took the loaves and the fishes, and after giving thanks, broke and distributed to the multitude. After all had eaten, the disciples, at His word, gathered up the broken pieces which remained and filled twelve baskets with them. The miracle convinced the people that He was the expected prophet.

In their enthusiasm for Jesus they desired to take Him by force and make Him king, but He escaped. At evening the disciples embarked alone for Capernaum. When it was dark and a terrible wind was blowing, they saw Jesus walking toward them on the sea. They were afraid until Jesus reassured them by His words, "It is I; be not afraid." They received Him into their boat and soon reached Capernaum. Meanwhile many of the multitude, who had seen the disciples leave in the only boat there, remained over night hoping to see Jesus again, but in the morning they left for Capernaum by boats which had come there during the night from Tiberias. At Capernaum they found Jesus and asked Him in astonishment how He had come there.

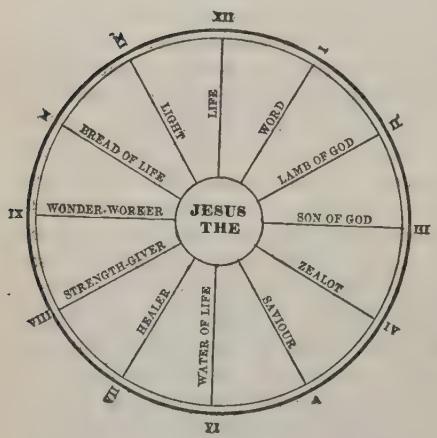
Lesson X. Jesus told them that they were not seeking Him because they had understood the meaning of His miracle, but because they had eaten the loaves. Work not for perishable food alone, He warned them, but for the food which abides unto eternal life, the life which was the gift that the Son of man had to bestow from the Father. "What work must we do that will be pleasing to God?" they questioned. "The work that pleases God is faith in His Son," Jesus answered. "You ask us to believe in You," they returned, "what sign can You show of Your divine mission greater than that shown by Moses in giving the manna in the wilderness?" "Moses gave not the manna, it was the gift of my Father who now offers to you the true bread from Heaven," was Jesus' reply. "Give us this bread," they cried. Jesus said to them: "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Continuing, Jesus warned them that though they had seen Him they had not believed, and encouraged them by saying that some would come to Him and He would receive them.

He had come down from Heaven not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. The Jews murmured at His claiming to be the Bread from Heaven, and Jesus re-asserted His claim. They could not accept Him because they knew Him and His family so well; Jesus replied that conviction would come with acceptance of Him. The result of Jesus' discourse was that the great majority of His professed followers

deserted Him, but the twelve remained loyal. At the feast of tabernacles Jesus suddenly appeared in the temple and taught the people. The hostility of the rulers increased; they sent officers to arrest Him, but these returned saying they could not, for "never man so spake" as He did. The people were divided in their convictions regarding Jesus' claims; many were profoundly impressed by His words. He appealed to all who were athirst to come to Him, declaring Himself to be the Water of Life and the Light of the World.

Lesson XI. Jesus and His disciples stopped before a beggar who had been blind from his birth, and His disciples asked whose sin, the man's or his parents', was the cause of his blindness. It was no one's sin, Jesus replied, but his blindness should make manifest the works of God. The time for working was short, for the night was coming when no man could work; He was the Light of the World. Jesus then spat on the ground, and made clay with which He anointed the man's sightless eyes and bade him wash them in the pool of Siloam. The man obeyed and returned seeing. The miracle aroused great excitement. The people could with difficulty be persuaded that this man who could see was actually the beggar who had been born blind.

The Pharisees asked the man how he received his sight, and he told them. They called Jesus a sinner for giving him sight on the Sabbath day. They questioned his parents, and then re-examined the man. "One thing I know," he told them, "that whereas I was blind, now I see." Again they asked him the same questions, and he in turn asked them if they would become Jesus' disciples, and told them that "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing," whereupon they cast him out of the synagogue. Jesus found him and revealed Himself to him as the Son of God, and the man believed and worshipped him.



OUTLINE OF THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

I. The Prologue. I.
II. The Revelation of Christ to the World.
  1. Testimony of the Baptist. II.
  2. Testimony of the Disciples. III.
  3. Cleansing of the Temple. IV.
  4. Talk with Nicodemus. V.
  5. Talk with the Woman of Samaria. VI.
  6. Miracle of Healing. VII.
III. The Growth of Antagonism.
  1. After the Miracle at the Pool of Bethesda. VIII.
  2. After Feeding the Multitude. IX, X.
  3. After Miracle of Giving Sight to Man born Blind. XI.

REVIEW OUTLINES FOR THE BLACKBOARD

1. The Word Made Flesh.
   - The Word with God. 1–5.
   - The Witness of John. 6–8.
   - The Word Incarnated. 9–14.
2. Jesus and John the Baptist.
   - John's Humility. 25–28.
   - The Lamb of God. 29–31.
   - John's Testimony. 32–34.
3. Jesus and His First Disciples.
   - Andrew and John. 35–40.
   - Peter and Philip. 41–44.
   - Philip and Nathanael. 45–49.
4. Jesus Cleanses the Temple.
   - Temple Desecrated. 13, 14.
   - Temple Cleansed. 15–17.
   - Conversation with the Jews. 18–22.
5. Jesus the Saviour of the World.
   - "God so loved the World." 14–16.
   - The Judgment. 17, 18.
   - The Choice. 19–21.
6. Jesus and the Woman of Samaria.
   - True Worship. 19–24.
   - The Announcement. 25, 26.
   - The Result. 27–29.
7. Jesus Heals the Nobleman's Son.
   - "A Prophet in His Own Country." 43–45.
   - The Nobleman's Request. 46–49.
   - The Nobleman's Faith. 50–54.
8. Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda.
   - The Afflicted. 1–4.
   - The Question. 6, 7.
   - The Cure. 8, 9.
9. Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand.
   - Proving of Philip. 5–7
   - The Supply. 8, 9.
   - The Miracle. 10–14.
10. Jesus the Bread of Life.
    - The Rebuke. 26, 27.
    - Believe in Christ. 28, 29.
    - The True Bread. 30–37.
11. Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind.
    - The Disciples' Lesson. 1–5.
    - The Miracle. 6, 7.
    - The Result. 8–12.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

I. What is the first verse of the first chapter of John? Whom does John mean by "The Word"? Who bore witness to Jesus? What right did Jesus give to those who received Him? What is the Golden Text?

II. Where did John the Baptist baptize the people? Who came to him there? What question did they ask? Why did they think he must be Christ or Elijah or a prophet? What did John say he was unworthy to do for Jesus? What did he declare Jesus to be? How did he say that he knew Jesus was the Son of God? What is the Golden Text?

III. What two disciples of John the Baptist left him and followed Jesus? Did this please the Baptist? What invitation did Jesus give them? What did they do the next day? What did Jesus say to Simon? What disciple followed Jesus at His command? Whom did Philip tell about Jesus? What did he tell

him in the words of our Golden Text? What was Nathanael's answer? Then what did Philip say? How did Jesus show Nathanael that He knew about him? What confession did Nathanael make?

IV. Tell the story of the cleansing of the temple. What is the Golden Text?

V. What Pharisee came to talk with Jesus at night? What did they talk about? What did Jesus tell him about the death He must die? What did He say about God's love, in the words of the Golden Text?

VI. When Jesus was going through Samaria with whom did He have a long talk? Where were His disciples? What did Jesus ask from this woman? Why was she surprised at His request? What did Jesus tell her that He could give her? When He told her about her past life what did she call Him? What question did she ask? How did Jesus tell her that God should be worshipped? Who did He tell her He was? What did she say about Him to the people of Sychar? What is the Golden Text? What does it mean?

VII. Who came to Jesus at Cana? What did he want Jesus to do? Why did not Jesus go to Capernaum as the nobleman wished? What did He tell the nobleman? How did the latter show his faith in Jesus? Golden Text?

VIII. Describe the people that Jesus saw at the pool of Bethesda. How long had one man been sick? What did Jesus say to him? Why did He ask this question? What was the man's answer? What did he believe? What did Jesus tell him to do? What was the result? Why did the Jews find fault with Jesus for this miracle? What is the Golden Text?

IX. Where was Jesus when He fed the five thousand? What question did He first ask of Philip? What was Philip's answer? What did Andrew tell Jesus? What did Jesus command? Then what did He do? How much food was left over? What is the Golden Text?

X. What reason did Jesus give to the people for their seeking Him in Capernaum after the miracle of the loaves and fishes? What did He tell them not to do? What did He tell them to do? What miracle did they tell Him that Moses had done? What did they expect Jesus to do? What answer did Jesus make? What is the Golden Text? What does it mean?

XI. What question did the disciples ask Jesus in regard to a man that was born blind? What was Jesus' answer? What did Jesus then do? What did the people say? What was the man's answer? What is the Golden Text?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

I. What constitutes the prologue of the Gospel of John? What are its teachings? Why does John make use of the term, "The Word"? What other terms does he apply to Jesus in these verses? Who have the right to become children of God? Who was the first witness to Jesus?

II. Who came to John the Baptist from Jerusalem? For what purpose? Whom did they think he might be? What did John claim to be? Why did he say he baptized in water? How did he express his humility? What did he call Jesus? What did the expression mean?

III. Who were Jesus' first disciples? Why did the Baptist wish them to leave him for Jesus? How was each led to Him? What prophecy did Jesus make concerning Simon? What did He say of Nathanael? What was Philip's testimony concerning Jesus? Nathanael's?

IV. What did the feast of the passover commemorate? When was it held?

How far was Capernaum from Jerusalem? What was their difference in level? What cleansing of the temple is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels? What reply did Jesus make to the demand for a "sign" proving His authority? What did He mean? What did the Jews assume that He meant? How did they afterwards distort this saying and use it?

V. What was Nicodemus' greeting to Jesus when he came to see Him at night? What did Jesus tell him about membership in the Kingdom of God? What did He tell him about Himself? In what words did He declare the love of God to man? What did He say about His judging the world?

VI. What aroused the disciples of John the Baptist, and how did John show his greatness? Why did Jesus decide to go to Galilee? Where did He meet the woman of Samaria? Describe the feeling that existed between Jews and Samaritans. Narrate the conversation between Jesus and the woman. What did Jesus mean by saying that the Samaritans worshipped they "knew not what"? By saying that "salvation is of the Jews"? What two prejudices of the Jews did He disregard? How did He settle the question as to where God should be worshipped?

VII. What was the first miracle Jesus wrought in Cana? What was the second? What was the most remarkable thing about this miracle? How did Jesus educate the faith of the nobleman?

VIII. Give an account of what took place at the pool of Bethesda. Why was Jesus censured? What was His defence?

IX. Why did Jesus go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee? How were His plans frustrated? How did He always meet interruptions? Give an account of the feeding of the five thousand which combines all the Gospel accounts. What other miracle is told in all four Gospels? (None.) What did the miracle mean to the people?

X. How did Jesus escape from the people? Why? Where did they find Him? Why had they followed Him, according to Jesus' words? What did He wish them to learn from the miracle of the loaves and fishes? What did He tell them to do? How did He answer their implied comparison between this miracle and that of the manna in the wilderness? What was the effect of His discourse on the people? Why did His brethren find fault with Him? What opinions prevailed concerning Him at Jerusalem? Why did not the men sent to arrest Him carry out their order? What did Jesus declare Himself to be?

XI. Give an account of the healing of the man born blind. Why did Jesus make use of the clay and the washing in the pool of Siloam? How did the Pharisees cross-question the man? What was the result?

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

After picturing the scene of each lesson, let the pupil give the title and golden text and answer a few questions in regard to it.

I. I see an aged man writing. He has just finished these words, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and his face is bright with the glow of happy thoughts.

II. A strange looking man seems to be the chief figure in this picture. He wears a garment made from the skin of an animal, and he stands near a river, closely surrounded by a group of well-dressed men.

III. This picture has several scenes. In the first one, the strangely-clad man

is standing with two other men, and pointing at a Man who is passing in the distance. In the second scene, the Man who was pointed out has turned around and is speaking with the two men who are following Him. Now I see one of the two men hastening along with a third man. Here the Man pointed out is talking with yet another man. Finally there is a man coming out from under a tree with thick foliage and meeting this last man, and after talking awhile they, too, start off in haste.

IV. In this picture there is great excitement. A Man with flashing eyes and a whip in His hand, is driving out from an enclosed place oxen and sheep, while other men are hurrying to get away from the place, some of them carry baskets and cages. Tables are overturned, and coins are scattered about.

V. Here there is peace and quiet. Two men are earnestly talking in a room on the roof of a house from which an outside stairway leads to the street.

VI. A Man is seated by a well in the open field, talking with a woman who is holding a water pot. Now the woman is gone, but her water pot lies on the ground. The Man is still here, and is surrounded by a group of men.

VII. The Man whom we have seen in all the pictures except the first one is here, and another man who looks like a soldier is holding out his hands to Him as though he were begging Him to do something for him. The scene changes, and I see a boy tossing about on a bed while the people in the room are weeping. The third scene is on the road. A man coming from one way is met by several men coming from the opposite direction, and they are talking excitedly and seem very happy.

VIII. There is a pool of water here and there are many sick looking people lying near by under a covering which protects them from the sun. The Man whose face we now know so well is leaning over one of the men, who suddenly gets up and, stooping over, rolls up something which he carries away with him.

IX. I see a very great crowd of people sitting in groups on the grass, looking toward a Man who stands in an attitude of prayer. Several other men and a small boy stand near by.

X. Now we are inside a church (synagogue) where there is a great crowd of people to whom a Man is talking very earnestly.

XI. On the steps of a great building a beggar is sitting, and a number of men are passing by when they suddenly stop before him. One of the men puts His hands on the beggar's eyes. Now the beggar is hurrying off.

SUBJECTS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW

1. A life of John the Apostle. See the Subject Index of the Bible.
2. A life of John the Baptist. Subject Index.
3. The four lessons on Miracles. Which is the only one recorded in all four Gospels? Where was each miracle wrought? What means used in each case? For what purpose? Of what spiritual truth was each a sign? Why were these miracles recorded by John? (20. 31.) Which miracle seems to you the most marvelous? Why?
4. Make a list of the words and terms applied to Jesus in the quarter's lessons.
5. For each lesson write a truth learned, and a sentence sermon, a Bible verse, and a thought of your own in regard to that truth.
6. The testimony borne to Jesus as the Messiah in the quarter's lessons.
7. An analysis of the contents of the first nine chapters of the Book of John.

LESSON XIII — MARCH 29

TEMPERANCE LESSON

Prov. 23. 29–35 Commit v. 31

Golden Text

At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. Prov. 23. 32.

LESSON TEXT Prov. 23. 29–35.

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?
30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.
31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright.
32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.
33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.
34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
35 They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and* I was not sick; they have beaten me, *and* I felt *it* not; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

29. A series of questions answered in the next verse. The words translated *woe, sorrow,* are interjections in the Hebrew, and are translated in the margin of the Revised Version as *Oh! Alas! Babbling.* R. V., *complaining. Wounds without cause.* Drunkenness leads to quarreling and fighting; the wounds received were without cause because they were unnecessary.

30. *Go to seek.* R. V., *go to seek out.* R. V. margin, *try.* "The words elsewhere used of diligent search after knowledge is here used, as if ironically, of the instigations of connoisseurs in wine, meeting to test its qualities." *Plumptre. Mixed wine.* Perhaps mixed with spices or with opiates.

31. *When it is red.* The usual color of the wine of Palestine. *Giveth his color.* R. V., *sparkleth.* "Literally, *gives its gleam* (the term rendered *gleam* is the ordinary word for *eye*), that is, full of life." *Toy. It moveth itself aright.* R. V., *it goeth down smoothly.* See Song of Solomon 7. 9.

32. *Biteth like a serpent.* The wine which fascinates like a serpent (verse 31), is also as poisonous as a serpent.

33. *Strange women.* R. V., *strange things.* The verse describes the effects of delirium tremens.

34. *As he that lieth upon the top of a mast.* "The text appears to be corrupt. Literally it reads: *And as one sleeping* (or *lying*) *on the head*—; the word left untranslated (Revised Version, *mast*) occurs only here in the Old Testament, and its meaning, if it be a real word, is unknown; it is similar to the term for *line, rope,* but can hardly mean *mast* (which is a mere guess).

It is simpler to adopt the expression, 'Like one asleep in a violent storm,' which requires no great change in the Hebrew." *Toy.*

35. A soliloquy of the drunkard. *I was not sick.* R. V., *I was not hurt. When shall I awake?* "Better, omitting the interrogation, when I shall awake, I will seek it yet again." *Plumptre.* "The time seems long before the drunkard fully awakes from the slumber after his debauch in order to return to the orgies of yesternight." *Wordsworth.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

29. *Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow?* The drunkard is, to my mind, the most foolish man that exists in the world. He is the most foolish man, the most mistaken man. For consider: The drunkard sacrifices everything in the world for what? An hour's vague gayety, to be followed by some twenty-four hours of racking headache and intolerable illness. *J. B. Martin.*

29. *Who hath redness of eyes?* A colonel of the army came to Lincoln to complain that he had been unjustly dismissed from the army for drunkenness while on duty. Lincoln knew that the officer had a noble record, but after listening patiently to his story, he arose and, grasping the soldier's right hand in both his own hands, exclaimed with a broken voice: "Colonel, I know your story. But you carry your own condemnation in your face."

33. *Thy heart shall utter perverse things.* A young man of a fine family, of splendid gifts, was going down fast through strong drink. His friends had pleaded with him, but he had taken their warnings as an insult. One day one of them, who was a court stenographer, was sitting in a restaurant, when the young man came in with a companion, and took the table next to him, sitting down with his back to him without seeing him. He was just drunk enough to be talkative about his private affairs, and, on the impulse of the moment, the stenographer pulled out his note-book, and took a short-hand report of every word he said. The next morning the stenographer copied it all out, and sent it around to the young man's office. In less than ten minutes the latter came tearing in with the exclamation, "What is this, anyhow?" "It's a stenographic report of your monologue at the restaurant last evening," his friend replied, and gave him a brief explanation. "Did I really talk like that?" he asked faintly. "I assure you it is a verbatim report," was the reply. He turned pale and walked out. He never drank another drop. *Herald and Presbyter.*

35. *They have beaten me, and I felt it not.* When we come to inquire into the cause of imprisonment, we are constantly impressed with one fact which can not be denied, that the curse of drunkenness has proved directly or indirectly the ruin of between eighty and ninety per cent. of those prisoners. Many a blow has been struck, many a deed committed, many a robbery perpetrated, by those so under the influence of this evil spirit that when they have come to their senses in the prison cell they have asked, Where am I, what have I done? and have literally had no memory of the deed that brought them there. It would not, of course, be in accordance with common sense or justice to say that they were therefore not guilty. They are guilty; they do deserve punishment; but have we not the right to believe that, if delivered from this evil habit, they might be found to be trustworthy men? *Maud Ballington Booth.*

35. *I will seek it yet again.* We feel that if we wished to prove that we have the power of resisting, we could do so; and it would be humiliating to

our pride, and paralyzing to our desire of excellence, if we thought otherwise. Yet the time may come when our actions will seem uncontrollable. The temptation has mastered us, not we the temptation. *John Stuart Mill.*

I had once in my Sunday-school a class of boys from ten to twelve years old. They belonged to good families. Three or four years later they formed a club. It was secret, but they said they had organized it for intellectual and moral improvement. They hired a room in which they gathered evenings. They brought in several other boys. One of the class was appointed chaplain. After a while it was learned that liquor had been brought into the club room. The chaplain soon withdrew. He is now a Christian minister. One day one of the most attractive members of the club came and confessed to me that he had been drinking, and that his parents had found it out, and he begged me to tell his mother, who was almost insane with anxiety, that he would never drink again. But he did, and went from bad to worse till he disappeared. Friends of another came to ask counsel what to do, because he had forged a check. Employers of another told me that he had defrauded them of money. Another became engaged to a charming girl, but she broke the engagement because he drank, and in a few years he died a drunkard. None of these boys at ten years of age seemed likely to be exposed to the temptation to drink. *A. E. Dunning,* in *The National Temperance Advocate.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

30. *They that tarry long at the wine.* In ancient days, and in Eastern countries, there was not the one hundredth part of the necessity which now exists for these warnings. The wines of ancient days were mildness itself compared with the flaming, burning intensity of modern spirits. There was nothing in ancient days resembling our gin-shops and public houses, which flare at the corners of our streets. . . . Total abstinence was a fundamental law of ancient Romanism, of Buddhism, and of Mohammedanism; it was the rule of life among the ancient Medes and among the ancient Persians; and it is very striking that among the Egyptian papyri there is one as old as 3,600 B. C. on which we find among other moral aphorisms a warning against wineshops. "My son," it says, "do not linger in the wineshop; thou fallest on the ground, thy limbs become weak as those of a child." *F. W. Farrar.*

35. *When shall I awake.* When Ham had set out the vine, Satan brought and poured upon it a peacock's blood. When its leaves began to appear he poured over them the blood of an ape; when the grapes began to form he watered them with the blood of a lion, and upon the ripe fruit he spilled the blood of a pig. The wine thus nurtured with the blood of these four animals has acquired these properties: the first glass of wine animates the drinker so that his vivacity is great and his color heightened; in this condition he resembles a peacock. When the fumes of the liquor rise to his head, he becomes as gay and antic as an ape. When he has become drunken he rages as the lion, and in the height of this condition he falls and grovels like a pig sprawling out in heavy slumber. *A Musselman Tradition related by Colin de Plancy.*

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Three children were playing in a school yard.

They called their game "Home." How do you suppose they played it? One was the father, and he was drunk and was ill-treating another who was the mother, and the third was the policeman who was arresting the drunken father! You in your pleasant homes can not know what home must be to children who have a father or a mother who drinks. Our lesson to-day gives a true picture of the effect of strong drink on the one who drinks, but it doesn't say anything about the effect his drinking has upon his family and home.

For Older Pupils. The Book of Proverbs has well been called "a manual of conduct." Its purpose is to teach such virtues as industry, honesty, kindness, forgiveness; to give warnings against vices; and to praise the worth of wisdom. When a New York merchant asked Mr. Whitelaw Reid what was the best book for him to give his clerks as a business hand-book he recommended "The Book of Proverbs."

The opening words of the book are, "The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel"; the first verse of chapter 25 says, "These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out"; the first verse of chapter 30, "the words of Augur, the son of Jakeh; the oracle": and of chapter 31, "the words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him." The verses of our lesson to-day are taken from the section (22. 17–24. 34) that is ascribed to "the wise" (22. 17; 24. 23). It is thought that these sayings were combined in one book after the Exile, but that most of them were very old, and many of them were the words of Solomon.

Our lesson has been described as "a martial ode or song on the subject of temperance," "the fullest and liveliest description of drunkenness in the Old Testament."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I At the Last

Think of the Other End. Every ladder has two ends. If you carry one, thinking only of the front end, you may break a window or some one's nose (and temper) with the other end. There are always more than one thing to think about. The present pleasure may be linked with future pain. The careless springtime may mean a hungry autumn, and reckless sowing of wild oats a harvest of pain and shame and bitterest self-reproach.

How significant are the words in Proverbs about the peril of wine-drinking, "At the last!" These are words that the devil never uses. At first laughter and exhilaration, sharper wit and swifter pulses; "at the last" dregs and degradation. Who would dare begin to drink if he could see first that end of the ladder which is in the ditch? Let a repulsive drunkard offer a young man his first glass of wine, and what chance is there of his taking it? But with a crowd of good fellows, or at a dinner, it is quite different. Is it? That is where it begins. If you know of any person ruined by drink, you know of some one at least who once was as pure as you. If you begin, you may be as terrible a wreck as he. "At the last" need never be said of you, however, if you will refuse, if you will conquer attractive temptation at first. How thankful, then, you will be at the last!

A virtuous life may seem dull at first, and the laughter of the thoughtless, self-indulgent crowd may sound alluringly, but "he laughs best who laughs

last." Ask any honest, pure, temperate man if he regrets any of the struggle it cost him to conquer temptation; ask a blighted and broken man, drinking the dregs of his sinful cup, whether it paid.

The other end of life is coming for us all. It is only a question of time. What shall it mean to you? No one can answer for you. Decide now, absolutely, changelessly, at any cost, that you will be the Lord's follower, industrious, clean, self-controlled, useful, victorious. It will mean a crown for you at the last. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." *Maltbie D. Babcock,* in *Forward.*

An Act oft repeated becomes a Habit. An act creates a molecular change in the nerves. The same act repeated creates the same molecular nerve changes. Changes repeated over and over become at length lines of least resistance, a track along which the nerve-force runs easily. What a difference between the reluctance with which one first commits a wrong act and the readiness with which he commits the repeated acts! The pioneer who blazes his way through a forest exerts an effort of which the one who follows in the pathway he has made knows nothing; the first wrong act opens the lines of least resistance along which succeeding acts easily follow. Acts that easily follow one another after awhile become a necessity, the act has become a habit, and the habit, if a wrong one, has become a tyrant. This well-known quotation must occur to every one in this connection: "Sow an act, and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap a character; sow a character and reap a destiny."

The Fly and the Vulture. Once a prince was eating when a fly came through the open window and alighted on his food. He could have killed it easily, but instead idly watched it, and admired its iridescent wings. The next day it came again, this time as large as a butterfly. "Do not harm it," the prince said to his courtiers, "there is food enough for both of us, and see how beautiful its wings have become!" The third day it had grown as large as a bat, and the prince became alarmed as he saw it take all his drink. He ordered all the windows and doors closed that it might not enter again. The fourth day, it was the size of a hawk; it broke through a window and entered as before, and this time it devoured all the food upon the table. "Put iron bars across the windows," commanded he thoroughly alarmed, "that I may eat and drink and not die." But the next day the attendants heard the twisting of bars and the shattering of glass and then screams, and rushing in they found the prince dead upon the floor, and upon his throat were the marks of the beak and talons of a vulture. At first he could have killed the fly but at last the vulture killed him. At first you may overcome an inclination to do wrong, at last the inclination becomes so strong that it overcomes you, as this fable teaches.

Nothing is ever wiped out. Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice, leaves a scar. The drunken man excuses himself from every fresh dereliction by saying, "I won't count this time." Well, he may not count it, and a kind Heaven may not count it, but it is being counted, none the less. Down among the active nerve cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up, to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course, this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many

separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work. *William James, Psychology.*

II It biteth like a Serpent and stingeth like an Adder

As Subtle as a Serpent. Not only the sting of the serpent, but the subtlety of the serpent is in wine. The deception lies in the fact that the habit of drinking will become confirmed before you know that it is enslaving you. Every glass of liquor increases the desire for another glass. A loaf of bread, a dish of beef, a draught of milk, satisfies hunger; they do not breed a raving appetite. This fact makes it so difficult to use wine or brandy without running into excess. A habit of drinking is formed and confirmed before the drinker is aware. . . . Let but the poison of that serpent enter into the blood and the globules of the brain, and it becomes a desperate battle for life; and where the grace of God gives one Gough the victory, a multitude die of the serpent's venomous bite. *Theodore L. Cuyler.*

The Effect of Wine on Students. A healthy young man who drinks wine or any such fluid need not be long in doubt whether he has taken into his system a friend or a foe. He can not help knowing, if he observes himself closely, that the wine is an enemy. He perceives that it increases, not quenches, thirst; that it raises his spirits for half an hour or more, according to the amount used, and depresses them for several hours that follow; that it flushes, excites, disturbs, perverts, and therefore injures him.

If he conscientiously watches its effects, he knows this, and all the sophistry of all the sophists can not disguise the fact from him. He knows it as well as Sydney Smith knew it when he wrote to Lady Holland that, without abstaining from wine, "London was stupefaction and inflammation."

This is not preaching; it is simple fact, and known to be such by all honest investigators. Students need the best food that civilization can supply, and that food should be eaten in the best manner known to civilized life. But when it comes to intoxicating drinks, there is only one safe and wise rule, which is expressed in one word: Abstain. *The Youth's Companion.*

III Contemplation of Evil

Look not thou upon the Wine when it is Red. This seems to be a prohibition of the use of wine; it is, at least, a warning to keep away from temptation. It is the only safe way. Lead us not into temptation, we pray, but "No man can ask honestly or hopefully to be delivered from temptation," says Ruskin, "unless he has himself honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it." If strong drink has any allurement for us, we should not go where we shall be tempted to take it, and if we do not know whether or not we have any appetite for it, we should not risk the discovery. It is wise to keep away from danger; it is unwise to see how near we can go in safety. A reckless man in a zoological garden once seized a venomous serpent by the nape of the neck and held it up before his companions. He thought he had the serpent wholly in his power. But it began to coil its long body about his arm, and then slowly to tighten its grasp, until the man in agony was obliged to drop his hold on its neck. The serpent quickly

turned and bit him, and his death followed. He thought he was strong enough to play with the serpent and thrust it from him when wearied of the play. Many think they are strong enough to play with temptation of any sort, but they find sooner or later that the temptation has mastered them. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

A noted artist said that he never allowed himself to look at a badly painted picture, for if he did his brush was sure to take a hint from it. Whoever is tempted to tarry at the wine or over a bad book or with evil companions or in the neighborhood of any evil should make this artist's rule his own, for if he yields, his character is sure to be marred by it.

Eve would not have eaten the forbidden fruit had she not lingered by the tree and listened to the voice of the tempter.

Two Ways of fighting a Temptation. Dr. Wayland Hoyt has told the story of the way in which a friend of his was almost conquered by temptation. This friend had had a long fight with the drink habit and had come off victor. One day to escape from a sudden rain storm he took refuge in a near by saloon. He sat down and began to read a newspaper. Then his newspaper lowered itself, seemingly of its own will power, till he could see the rows of decanters behind the bar, and the decanters seemed to say to him, "You're wet; you need what I hold. Just one drink of me will do you good." He thrust up his paper, and again it lowered itself. He threw down the paper and rushed out into the storm. "He was victor, but he was almost victim," says Dr. Hoyt. "It would have been far better if he had never entered that saloon, though it were raining pitchforks. Keep out of the place and way of temptation."

Somewhere I have read a story about the way in which Jim, a baggageman, put temptation out of his way. He owned a number of game roosters, and one morning he took an ax and cut off all their heads. When he told his wife what he had done, she said they were too old to cook, and she could not see why he had done such a foolish thing. "I don't care," Jim answered, "I haven't any use for them any longer. I used to take a couple of them out in a lot where people would see them Sunday mornings on their way to church, and then I would fight them for all they were worth. I'm none too strong anyway, and so I thought that if I killed the roosters no fellow could come along some Sunday morning and say, 'Come, Jim, put a couple of them in a bag, and let's go and fight them.' If they're dead, I can't go,—can I?"

Harboring Wrong Thoughts. When Jacob Riis first came to New York he could get no work, and one rainy night when his clothes were wet through and he was famished and weak for lack of food, he chanced to find himself by the East River. As he looked into the water, the thought came to him that there was no use in keeping up the struggle any longer, he could so easily drop into the river and end it all. Then he heard a whine and felt the pressure against him of a little dog that had been following him about for a few days. He put out his hand to stroke the little animal and the dog licked it and then jumped up and licked his face. "The love of the little beast thawed the icicles in my heart," Mr. Riis explains; "I picked it up in my arms and fled from the temptation; fled to where there were lights and men moving, anywhere, so that I saw and heard the river no more." Young people sometimes say that they can not control their thoughts, and they are not responsible for them. Mr. Riis could not have prevented the thought of suicide entering his

mind as he stood by that river, but he could and did prevent its lingering in his mind by leaving the river which was the occasion for the thought. Had he remained the thought would probably have become a desire, the desire a purpose, and the purpose a deed. We may not be able to prevent a wrong thought from coming to our minds, but we need not harbor it, we can drive it away by leaving the inciting cause or by determinedly occupying our minds with other things. There is a proverb that we can not prevent a bird from alighting on our head, but we can prevent its building a nest in our hair. An old-time writer has expressed the thought in this way: "If Satan comes up to my door, I can not help it; if he lifts the latch and walks in I can not help it: but if I offer him a chair, and begin with him a parley, I put myself altogether in the wrong."

The Impulsiveness of Consciousness. Positive self control means that we are to heed that principle which the psychologists call the impulsiveness of consciousness; that is, that every thought, by its very presence in the mind, tends to pass into act, and will do so, if it is not hindered by the presence of some other thought leading in some other direction. I regard that principle as of very great importance in all our moral and spiritual life. If you are sitting in the parlor of a friend, while you are waiting for him, and there is an open letter on the table, and you are not thinking particularly of what you are doing, but have your eye on the letter, before you know it you will very likely put out your hand and take it up and begin to read it until you recall yourself with a start. The single idea, unchecked by any other for the moment, was present in the mind; it passed into action almost in spite of you. The teaching of modern psychology, then, is that a thought in your mind will pass into act unless it is checked by some other thought; and for our moral life this is strenuous counsel to withstand beginnings, — don't dally with the temptation. Don't tarry in the presence of it.

The small boy who is looking through a fence at a patch of watermelons that is not his can not prevent his mouth from watering, but he can run. And you can not keep your emotions from rising in attention to the exciting object, but you can think of something else. You are not clay in the hands of your circumstances. You were endowed with that which makes you akin to God in His creative power — a will. *Henry Churchill King,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

Avoid it. As to gaze down a precipice seems to fascinate the spectator towards a shattering fall, so it is spiritually dangerous to gaze on excessive wickedness, lest its immeasurable scale should fascinate us as it were colossal without being monstrous. To gaze at sin for any purpose except learning to avoid it, has a dangerous side. It was the serpent fascinated Eve when they met face to face, not Eve the serpent. *Christina Rossetti.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Drink, the dynamite of modern civilization. *John D. Long.*

The contemplation of vice is vice. *Arabic Saying.*

Drink is Death's Prime Minister. *Addison.*

Far from me be the gift of Bacchus — pernicious, inflaming wine, that weakens both body and mind. *Homer.*

Dream not of freedom while under the mastery of your desires. *Plato.*

Statistics show that every fifth boy must be sacrificed to keep up the long line of drunkenness and crime. *J. R. Jacob.*

To parley with temptation is to play with fire. *Bunyan.*

First there cometh to the mind a bare thought of evil, then a strong imagination thereof, afterwards delight and evil motion, then consent. *Thomas à Kempis.*

First the man takes a dram
Then the dram takes a dram,
Then the drams take the man. *Chinese Saying.*

The joys of wine, of opium, of tobacco, and of all kindred drugs are mere tricks upon the nervous system; in greater or less degree they destroy its power to tell the truth, and in proportion as they have seemed to bring subjective happiness, so do they bring at last subjective horror and disgust. *David Starr Jordan.*

If a pledge had been offered me when I was a boy in Sabbath School I should have been spared those seven dreadful years. *John B. Gough.*

Men who are murdered by slow poisoning die just as surely as those who take arsenic. *Spurgeon.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler:
And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise. Prov. 20. 1.

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them! Isa. 5. 11.

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink! Isa. 5. 22.

Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide thy heart in the way.
Be not among winebibbers,
Among gluttonous eaters of flesh;
For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty;
And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags. Prov. 23. 19–21.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. Prov. 4. 14, 15.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way to escape, that ye may be able to endure it. 1 Cor. 10. 13.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Some one has said that if it is a small sacrifice to give up wine one should do it for the sake of others, but if it is a great sacrifice, one should do it for one's own sake.

In Japan they take young puppies and feed them on alcohol instead of milk so as to keep them small. "Cats may be dwarfed in the same way, and also boys."

Mr. Edward W. Bok says he was led to make up his mind never to touch liquor by seeing the ruin it brought. He has seen some of the brightest literary

men lose splendid positions owing to nothing else but their indulgence in wine, and he has noted that the most successful men in America to-day are those who never lift a wine glass to their lips. If I am ambitious to become a bright student or a success in any line of work, I can not afford to take the risk of drinking intoxicating liquor.

I will not entertain a thought of evil of whatsoever sort. If it comes to me, I will at once busy myself with something else and leave no room in my mind for the thought to stay.

I can now easily form right habits and break up wrong habits; as I grow older this will become more and more difficult.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Who is it that has woe, sorrow, contention, complaining, wounds without cause, redness of eyes? All these woes come upon the drunkard, he who tarries over wine and tries mixed wine. Look not on the wine, is the exhortation: shun its attractive appearance, its pleasing taste, for however desirable it may seem in the beginning, like the poisonous bite of the serpent and the sting of the adder it will produce fatal consequences in the end. One who is under the control of wine will see and speak strange things, he will be so devoid of reason and judgment that he will be like one foolhardy enough to lie down in the midst of the sea or on the top of a mast. The writer closes his lesson with the soliloquy of a drunkard who is past reformation: He has a vague idea that he has been in a quarrel and has been beaten but he feels it not, and his only desire is to awake from his drunken slumber that he may "seek it yet again."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Was Horace Greeley right in saying about drinking places that "the better they are, the worse; and the worse they are, the better?"

2. In order to combat the saloons some provision must be made for the opportunity of social fellowship elsewhere.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the entire chapter. 2. What is the subject of verses 1–16? Of 7–10? Of 11–15? Of 16–18? Of 19–21? 3. In what respects may Christ be likened to a door? 4. To a shepherd? 5. What brief parabolic allegories similar to those of the next lesson are found in the Synoptic Gospels? (Matt. 9. 37, 38; 24. 43–45; Luke 15. 4, 5; 17. 7–9.) 6. What other one in John's Gospel? (John 15. 1–8.) 7. What is said in Gen. 31. 39, 40; 37. 33; 1 Sam. 17. 34–36 about the life of a shepherd? 8. What great heroes of Israel had been shepherds? (Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David.) 9. How did David risk his life for his flock? (1 Sam. 17. 34–37.) 10. What parable is given in Matt. which was not understood and was therefore explained? (The Sower, Matt. 13. 3–8, 18–23.) 11. When did Jesus have compassion on a multitude of people because, as He said, they were sheep without a shepherd? (Mark 6. 34.) 12. Tell Christ's parable of the lost sheep. (Matt. 18. 10–14.) 13. Repeat the twenty-third Psalm. 14. Commit to memory the 14th and 15th verses of the 10th chapter of John.

SECOND QUARTER

LESSON I — APRIL 5

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10. 1–11. (Read John 10. 1–18.) Commit v. 9.

Golden Text

The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. John 10. 11.

LESSON TEXT John 10. 1–11 TIME December, A. D. 29

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.
2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.
3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.
4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.
5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.
6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.
7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.
8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.
9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.
11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Verily, verily.* These words are a solemn asseveration designed to draw attention to an important discourse following, and usually connecting it, also, with what has preceded. The Pharisees have claimed to be the spiritual guides of the people. In verse 9. 24, they say, We know that this man is a sinner. See also 9. 29, 34. In the parable of the Sheep-fold and of the Good Shepherd Jesus contrasts these false guides with Himself the true Guide.
Sheep-fold. R. V., *the fold of the sheep.* Under this figure the Kingdom of God is meant in the allegory.

4. *And when he putteth forth his own sheep. R. V., When he hath put forth all his own. For they know his voice.* "Here is the point of the parable." *Weiss.*

6. *This parable.* R. V., margin, *proverb.* The Greek word here used (παροιμία) is not the word used in the Synoptic Gospels for *parable.* It means literally *a path by the road* (not the beaten road), hence what is uncommon in discourse. Our word *allegory* or *illustration* interprets it better to our thoughts.

7. *Then said Jesus unto them again.* R. V., *Jesus therefore said unto them again.* See verse 6.

8. *All that ever came.* R. V., *All that came. Thieves and robbers.* The reference is not to true prophets like John the Baptist, who claimed only the authority "given him from Heaven," but to those who wrongly claimed an authority of their own as religious teachers. Compare Jesus' characterizations of the Pharisees as "ravening wolves," "robbers," "full of extortion and wickedness," etc., in Matt. 7. 15; 23. 13; Luke 11. 39, 52; 20.46, 47.

9. *Go in and out, and find pasture.* R. V., *Go in and out, and shall find pasture.* "The blessings promised are deliverance from peril, liberty, and sustenance. To 'go out and in' is a common Old Testament expression and denotes the free activity of daily life. Deut 28.6; Psa. 121.8; Jer. 37.4." *Dods.* Compare 8. 36.

10. *But for to steal.* R. V., *but that he may steal. I am come that they might have life.* R. V., *I came that they may have life. More abundantly.* R. V., *abundantly.*

11. *Giveth his life.* R. V., *layeth down his life.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1–18. The beautiful pastoral symbolism of our Lord's discourse runs through the first eighteen verses of this 10th chapter of John. It has been pointed out, however, that in these words we have not one parable but three, all of them drawn from Eastern pastoral life, each related to the others as part of a composite whole, yet each presenting a distinct contribution of thought.

These three parables are drawn from the circumstances attending three different hours of the pastoral day. The first parable is that of the Shepherd, and comprises the first six verses. The scene is laid in the early morning. During the night the sheep have been sheltered in a large open enclosure, in which, under the care of a single porter, numbers of flocks belonging to different owners have shared a common protection.

The second parable, which is that of the Door, runs from the seventh to the tenth verse, and carries forward our thought from daybreak to midday, and from the large night-fold to a structure set in the middle of the pasture. This fold meant to afford shade and security amid the day's heat and danger. The sheep may go in and out at will, according as they want food or rest. It was of this structure, with its wide swinging door, that Christ was thinking when He called Himself the Door. That door was at once a protection and a means of freedom.

The third parable shifts the scene still further forward and brings us to the close of the day. The shadows are creeping up the mountain slopes. The chills of sundown are in the air. The flocks must be led back to the night-fold. But on the way a sudden danger emerges. Wolves spring out of ambush and attack the sheep. It is a critical moment, and tests the quality of the shepherd. The hireling runs away. The good shepherd casts himself between the sheep and the wolves, and sacrifices himself to save the flock. *Charles A. Berry.*

11. *I am the good shepherd.* The statement of the object for which He had come (verse 10) forms the transition from the image of the Door to that of the Shepherd. The personal access to God's kingdom, the distributer of its blessings: He is also the very substance of the Kingdom Himself, as personal relation to

Him is the chief feature of the sheep. To be a sheep of Christ's, to know Him, to hear Him, to follow Him, is the Kingdom of God come within the soul. Through Christ we reach Christ; Christ is the Way and Door to Himself. *George Reith, St. John's Gospel.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *The fold of the sheep.* The sheepfold in Syria to-day is a low, flat building surrounded by a court. A hedge of thorn-bushes, or a stone wall with thorn bushes on the top, encloses it, to keep out wolves and thieves. "Sheep stealing is as much a profession in Turkey as horse thieving is in some other countries." The door may consist of only a few sticks laid across the entrance. Several flocks are brought to the same fold, and some under-shepherd with his dog watches at the entrance all night. This shepherd is called the porter in verse 3, for it is his duty to admit the shepherds in the morning.

4. *The sheep follow him, for they know his voice.* In the morning each man went a little way beyond the ring of tents, and standing there uttered his special call. Instantly the whole mass of sheep and goats was in motion, and as the shepherds continued to call the several flocks separated themselves, each streaming out of the camp in the direction of their respective guides.

The shepherds often give names to their sheep. Their names are descriptive of some trait or characteristic of the animal, as Long-ears, White-nose, Speckled, and so forth. Not unfrequently the sheep know their names, and will answer to them when called. Every shepherd worthy of the name knows and recognizes his charges by their appearance. When he goes over them to ascertain if all are there, either at coming home at night or on going out in the morning, he can tell, without counting, whether one be missing or not. Should one or two be wanting, he knows exactly which they are, and can describe them accurately. *C. T. Wilson, Peasant Life in the Holy Land.*

5. *A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him.* The shepherd depends upon the sheep to follow, and they in turn expect him never to leave them. They run after him if he appears to be escaping from them, and are terrified when he is out of sight, or when any stranger appears in his stead. He calls them from time to time to let them know that he is at hand. The sheep listen and continue grazing, but if any one else tries to produce the same peculiar cries and guttural sounds, they look around with a startled air, and begin to scatter. *Mackie's Bible Manners and Customs.*

11. *The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.* Here the connection between the shepherd and the sheep is simply one of pecuniary interest. Ask an English shepherd about his flock, he can tell you the number and the value; he knows the market in which each was purchased, and the remunerating price at which it can be disposed of. There is before him so much stock convertible into so much money.

Beneath the burning skies and the clear, starry nights of Palestine there grows up between the shepherd and his flock a union of attachment and tenderness. It is the country where at any moment sheep are liable to be swept away by some mountain-torrent, or carried off by hill-robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save their lives by personal hazard. Sometimes for the sake of an armful of grass in the parched summer days, he must climb precipices almost perpendicular, and stand on a narrow ledge of

rock where the wild goat will scarcely venture. And thus there grows up between the man and the dumb creatures he protects a kind of friendship. You love those for whom you risk, and they love you. *F. W. Robertson.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The allegory of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is closely connected with the lesson which we studied three weeks ago about the giving of sight to the man born blind. Jesus is addressing the Pharisees at Jerusalem who found fault with Him for His miracle of healing on the Sabbath. In the twenty-second and twenty-third verses of this chapter, it states that it was the Feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch of the temple, but it is not certain whether this note of time and place refers also to the words of our lesson in the first part of the chapter.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Have you ever heard our minister called the Pastor of this church? The word *pastor* comes from a Latin word meaning to pasture, to feed, and a pastor is one who feeds his people with spiritual food. A pastor is a shepherd, and his people are his flock. Who can repeat the first verse of the twenty-third Psalm? The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. Who remembers what was the golden text of our lesson about Jesus feeding the five thousand? He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. What does Jesus call Himself in our lesson to-day? What has He been called in the last quarter's lessons? The Lamb of God, the King of Israel, the Water of Life, the Bread of Life, the Light of the World. Does it seem fitting that Jesus should be called the King of Israel or the Light of the World, but rather strange that He should be called a Shepherd or a Door? As we study the lesson we shall see that these terms as applied to Jesus are beautiful and full of meaning for us.

Christ the Good Shepherd. From a White Marble Statue of the Third Century

For Older Pupils. In the Synoptic Gospels about thirty parables are given, which are "earthly stories with heavenly meanings," fictitious stories true to life told for the sake of the spiritual lessons they convey. John omits all these parables which form so large a part of Christ's teaching as related by the Synoptists, but gives two so-called parables not given in the other Gospels. These are not stories, and are in reality only extended similes; one is that of the Good Shepherd, our lesson to-day, and the other is that of the True Vine in chapter 15.

"The world is full of glorious likenesses.
The poets' power is to sort these out,
And to make music from the common strings
With which the world is strung."

Again and again in John's Gospel we see commonplace figures turned into glorious likenesses, and sublimest music made from the common strings with which the world is strung. "Who but Jesus would have

dared liken Himself to a hen?" questions Henry Ward Beecher, and then he adds, "Yet that single act of the hen which is charming was selected and forever will be full of divine beauty."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Christ the Door

The Meaning of the Figure. To compare Himself with a door, seldom a thing of beauty, without impressiveness, a mere instrument of convenience — this may well startle one at first. And yet, upon further thought, there will come to mind one and another and finally so many uses, that admiration will take the place of surprise. A door is the point in the wall where there may be exit or ingress. It is the point of defense for all that are within, and the point of separation for all that are without. It is the symbol of the great fact of the cherished household, and of the great jostling world that is separated from it — to the one a refuge; to the other exclusion.

The door is also the symbol of hospitality. To keep an open door is equivalent to the declaration that one is princely in the use of his house, and employs it as an instrument of pleasure to others.

The central idea, then, is this: That Christ is that power through which the soul finds relief, protection, peace, gladness; that He is the Benefactor; that He is the Father; that He greets the going out and the returning; that He uses His heavenly power, and His heavenly mansion, and His own self, as a door is used, where, going out and coming in, one has the full richness of the refined and loving household. He is the Way, and He is the Gate. These are familiar figures, both pointing to the same thing. Whoso enters by this living Door, shall find rest and safety. *H. W. Beecher.*

The Door must be opened from within. A friend of Holman Hunt's was looking in wondering admiration at his great picture of Christ knocking at the door when he suddenly exclaimed, "There is one thing wrong about your picture." "What is it?" inquired the artist. "The door swings on its hinges, but it has no handle." "Ah, that is not a mistake," replied Mr. Hunt; "the handle is inside; it is from within that the door must be opened to Christ standing without."

The Great Opportunity. Our Government has followed in the far East "the policy of the open door;" it does not want to grasp fresh territory, but it insists that we, along with other nations, shall have the opportunity of pushing our trade. The favorite motto of the late Frances Willard was, "Enter every open door;" she saw the necessity of seizing every opportunity of usefulness. An open door is an opportunity that is still within reach. A shut door is an opportunity that has passed.

I am the door, says Christ. It means that He is the great Opportunity of the human race. Now in what sense is He an opportunity to men? What do they gain by accepting the offer of Himself? What do they lose by rejecting or neglecting it? The question might be answered in many ways, but here we can not do better than follow His own words. "By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." *J. M. E. Ross.*

The Lesson of the Bird. One day I was in the new church building and I spied a bird flitting to and fro up among the timbers of the staging, evi-

dently much frightened. I was sorry for the poor thing, for there was the open door all the while. If I had only known bird language I would have told it. The next day I went into the church again. The first thing I did was to look for the bird; and there it was, poor, tired thing, flying back and forth again and beating itself against the walls and the windows.

Well, it escaped after awhile. How, do you think? It became tired and fell fluttering down, lower and lower — and there was the door. And then it just went out. Oh, it was so easy and so simple. The door had been there all the time. The door was put there on purpose for birds and folk to go in and out at. But it didn't know how easy the way was.

People sometimes are troubled on account of their sins — troubled to know the way out, and troubled about themselves. They think if they only work hard enough and try long enough they will get out of their troubles; and they flit and fly and flutter, and dash hither and thither, trying all sorts of things, but they don't get out. And Jesus is saying all the while: "I am the door." Sometimes the only way that some of us find the door is that we get so tired we can not beat the air with our wings another moment, and with despair we fly lower, or fall; and then we find the door.

Do you know, children, that many people in other lands than this have felt that the only way to get their sins forgiven was to cut themselves with knives, or to hang suspended from a pole with an iron hook in their back, or to take long pilgrimages upon their knees? They must work so hard, and so long, and do so many things before their sins could be forgiven. They are like that poor, tired bird beating itself against the walls, and right before them is the open door, Jesus Christ. That is the simple way for us all, just to give ourselves to Christ. He will take care of our sins, and take care of our despair, and take care of us. Jesus said, "I am the door." *Frank T. Bayley,* in *Little Ten-minutes.*

II Christ the Good Shepherd

The Meaning of the Metaphor. There is a bridge in Austria which is adorned with statues representing Christ in different aspects of His earthly life: one shows Him as a Carpenter, another as a Physician, a third as a King, a fourth as a Shepherd. The peasants offer their prayers before these statues, the artisan choosing the Carpenter, the farmer the Sower, each one the character that represents the help he most needs. Christ as the Shepherd appeals to every one, for this figure typifies alike the tender care, the wise guidance, the personal love, the rightful authority, and the self-sacrifice of our Saviour.

No image has been so lasting in the Christian Church as this of Christ the Good Shepherd, from the time when it was first drawn in rude outline on the roof of the catacombs at Rome. Christ is there represented with a lamb on His shoulders, with sheep about Him in various attitudes, some apparently listening to His voice, others turning away from Him.

In the writings of Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and other early Church Fathers, Christ is often called the Good Shepherd. The image has been found on the tombs of the rich and of the poor. "The popular religion of the first Christians," says Dean Stanley, "was the religion of the Good Shepherd. The kindness, the courage, the grace, the love, the beauty, of the Good Shepherd was to them, if we may so say, Prayer Book and Articles, Creed and Canon,

all in one. They looked on that figure, and it conveyed to them all that they wanted."

It is still the emblem of the Christian Church; the bishop is represented with his pastoral staff, the humblest preacher is known as the pastor.

The Good Shepherd knows His Sheep. Cecil Rhodes of South Africa once said: "I have long felt that the religion of Christ is the only one which meets the needs of all men, but when it comes to dogma, I doubt. I feel that there is a strange egotism in supposing the great God should concern Himself about a creature so small as myself." This thought is natural to almost every one, but Christ's whole life and teachings prove its falsity. Christ was "the discoverer of the individual." "I am the good shepherd;" He declares, "and I know Mine own and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father." He has a close, personal interest in each one of His followers.

"Try to feel, by imagining what the lonely Syrian shepherd must feel towards the helpless things which are the companions of his daily life, for whose safety he stands in jeopardy every hour, and whose value is measured to him, not by price, but by his own jeopardy, and then you have reached some notion of the love which Jesus meant to represent; that Eternal tenderness which bends over us, and knows the name of each with a separate solicitude, and gave itself for each with a sacrifice as special, and a love as personal, as if in the whole world's wilderness there were none other but that one."

III The Abundant Life

What Life is not. How different is this idea of a world-Saviour from that of many religious teachers of the past and of the present! Others have told him who was ambitious to attain the divine likeness to cease to live, or at least to live only enough to keep from suicide. Sometimes this reduction of life has been physical, and men have all but starved; sometimes it has been intellectual, and men have all but ceased to think; sometimes it has been ascetic; and men have abandoned the good things of the world to those who are not ambitious for righteousness. Jesus sets Himself against all these perversions of nature. Divine sonship does not consist in minimizing but in magnifying life, and the means of such enlargement is that which is the very heart of Jesus' mission — a revealed God.

God's will to us as revealed in and through Christ is not a series of negative commands forbidding many things and emptying life of any positive content. Instead, God's will is a call to the fullest personal achievement. He bids men to realize the possibilities that He has implanted within them; they are to be the best and to do the most that lies within their power. The ideal life is one of high character, noble service, and great achievement. *Editorial* in *Biblical World.*

How Life may be Ours. There is no possibility of growth except to such as have entered into life. Life is the prerequisite. I may thrust a dry stick into the ground and foster it with all possible care, giving it access to the sunlight and the dews of the morning, but I shall never have anything but a dry stick; no growth, no foliage, no fruit, because there was no life. So is the case with many a brave struggler who by the frequent use of good resolutions, strives in vain to attain unto the virtues of perfect manhood. Let him

begin at the beginning by accepting Christ, so entering into life. When once he begins to live, he must needs begin to grow. This is the word of promise: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches; abide in Me and I in you, so shall ye bear much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing." *David James Burrell, The Spirit of the Age.*

How a more Abundant Life may be Ours. Those who long for this more abundant life and seek for it aright may possess it. When I found that a tree in my yard bore more blossoms than fruit, I had the gardener dig around it, and put a bushel or two of fertilizer to reach its roots, and the next July it was crimsoned on every limb with ripe cherries. The more abundant life in the tree yielded the more abundant fruits. The simple reason why any Christian does not yield the fruits of the Spirit is the lack of inward vigor. The soil of his soul has become impoverished. He needs the tillage of prayer and honest self-examination, the subsoiling of repentance and a new in-pouring of the Spirit of Christ. "If a man abide in Me, he shall bring forth much fruit." *Theodore L. Cuyler, Stirring the Eagle's Nest.*

Who is most Alive? Christ brings out that divine nature of ours in which we most truly and gloriously live. He who is most alive to-day is he whose action is directed by the highest considerations, whose breast is warmest with love, whose mind is full of holy thought, whose heart throbs true to God, whose pulse beats quick and true to man, whose hands are full of gracious work, whose faith and hope seizing on the glorious future fill the present moment with power — this is truly to live, and such is the life of him whose life is hid with Christ in God. Man is full of great capabilities and possibilities, and Christ has a wonderful power of ascertaining these, evoking these, fulfilling these. As the New Version puts it, they who live in Christ and live for eternity "lay hold on the life which is life indeed." *W. L. Watkinson, Noon-day Addresses.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The door of mercy has hinges, and it may be shut, and then locked with the adamantine key of justice. *Raleigh.*

"Jesus is the door, but not the storm-door to be taken down and laid away in some musty attic or cellar during the summer."

Jesus is not the door into a little life; He leads us into the largest, fullest life. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

No disciple is a real disciple till he becomes a follower, going after the Shepherd, as one that follows by name, and is drawn by love. *Horace Bushnell.*

An oak sapling is a thing of beauty when its foliage is arrayed in the gorgeous tints of the autumnal season, but it is dwarfed to scorn in the presence of the full-grown tree which catches the sun all the day long and discloses its radiant glories of branch and leaf; Christianity at its maximum is the full-grown tree rather than the sapling. *The Christian Advocate.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter. Matt. 23. 13.

Woe unto the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith Jehovah. Jer. 23. 1.

Through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father. Eph. 2. 18.

Therefore doth the Father love me; because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. John 10. 17, 18.

If any man loveth God, the same is known by him. 1 Cor. 8. 3.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

As helpless as sheep without a shepherd should we be without the guiding and safe-guarding of the Good Shepherd.

Christ said that the sheep follow the shepherd for they know his voice. Am I following the Good Shepherd, obeying His voice? "I know Mine own" said Christ; does He know me?

Christ is the Door; the only way through which I may enter the Kingdom of God is through fellowship with Him. The door stands invitingly open, the opportunity is now mine to enter.

"Feed my sheep, feed my lambs," was the Good Shepherd's command to me as well as to Peter. I will not be like the robbers, endeavoring in my relationship to others to gain something from them, to make them serve me, but I will be like the Good Shepherd in seeking to serve them. I will do it willingly and gladly, even as the Good Shepherd willingly and gladly sacrificed His life for His sheep.

Am I merely existing, not really living? Have I, perhaps, received life through Christ, but fail to possess the abundant life? Goethe said that when he had not seen Schiller for a fortnight he was astonished to find what intellectual progress he had meanwhile made. I will not forget that similar spiritual progress may be mine; I will not be content with life alone, but will seek the abundant life.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Jesus is still speaking to the blind man to whom He had given sight, and to the Pharisees who had excommunicated the man and had condemned Jesus as a sinner for working the miracle on the Sabbath. He pictures a sheepfold into which a thief and a robber seek entrance by climbing up over the wall that encloses it, while the shepherd enters by the right way, through the door which the porter opens for him. His sheep know his voice and come at his call. He goes before them and they follow, while from a stranger they will flee, because they know not his voice.

The Pharisees in their pride can not see that Jesus is describing them under the picture of the thieves and robbers, nor does the man born blind grasp the comforting thought that he is independent of these Pharisees because they were false guides. Jesus, therefore, explains the picture He has drawn.

"I am the Door of the sheep," He announces, "the Door through which the sheep may enter the fold, the Way by which all people may enter the Kingdom of God. All others who claim My right and power are thieves and robbers. Any one who enters the fold (the Kingdom of God) through Me (who believes

in Me as the way of salvation appointed by the Father, and lives according to his belief), shall find in Me safety, freedom, and daily sustenance. The thief comes only to steal and kill; I came to earth to give the true life, the abundant life."

Then under another figure Jesus explains that it is possible for Him to give this true life only through the sacrifice of His own life. "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep;" while the man who is hired to care for sheep which he does not own will flee when wolves come, leaving the sheep to be killed. "I know Mine own and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father," are the beautiful words by which He declares the depth of the love existing between Himself and His followers. There are other sheep, Gentiles not connected with the Jewish fold, that He must bring, He adds, and His Father loves Him because the death He will die for the sake of giving life to His flock is perfectly voluntary, although it is His Father's command.

As usual after Jesus' discourses, the people who hear Him are divided in their opinion of Him. Some say He is possessed by a demon; others say that His words are not the words of one so possessed, and a demon could not open the eyes of the blind.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. True philanthropy must be exercised for individuals, not for the "masses."

2. Has the purpose of Christ been fulfilled? Is religion connected in the minds of most people with prohibitions rather than with opportunities, as limiting, circumscribing life rather than as giving freedom and making human life rich, full, abundant?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the entire 11th chapter of John. 2. Look up the references to Bethany in the Subject-Index of your Bible. 3. What promise was made by Jesus in verses 4, 11, 15, and 23? 4. Who had already spoken to Jesus the words of Mary in verse 32? (Verse 21.) 5. What is the shortest verse in the Bible? (35.) 6. On what other occasion is it reported that Jesus wept? (Luke 19.41.) 7. To what special miracle do the Jews refer in verse 37? (Lesson XI, first Quarter.) 8. What is said in John 19. 40 in regard to the Jewish custom of burial? 9. What two others had Jesus raised from the dead? (Luke 7. 11–18; Mark 5. 22–24, 35–43.) 10. Which of the three miracles of raising from the dead seems the most wonderful? Why? 11. Why did the Jews refer to the opening of the eyes of the blind man instead of to the restoring to life of the son of the widow of Nain or of the daughter of Jairus? (These two miracles were wrought in Galilee and the Jews of Jerusalem had no direct knowledge of them, while the miracle wrought on the blind man was of recent occurrence in their own midst.) 12. What effect did the raising of Lazarus have on the Jews? (45, 46.) 13. On Jesus' life? (47–53.)

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

John 11. 32–44. (Read John 11. 1–57.) Commit vv. 43, 44.

Golden Text

I am the resurrection and the life. John 11. 25.

LESSON TEXT John 11. 32–44 TIME February, A. D. 30

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

32 *Then when Mary was come.* R. V., *Mary therefore, when she came.* See verses 28, 29. *If thou hadst been here.* The words of Martha in verse 21; probably a thought often exchanged by the two sisters.

33. *Weeping. Wailing* better translates the Greek verb. *Which.* R. V., *who. He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.* R. V. margin, *He was moved with indignation in the spirit and troubled himself.* Many interpretations of this emotion have been offered — sympathy with the sisters, indignation at sin, the thought of His own death which would be hastened by the miracle He was about to work, the thought of the misery of a world where death reigns, indignation at the Jews. The two verbs in the Greek express nearly the same

thought, that of great agitation. Some of the Jews had come from Jerusalem (verses 18, 19), and Jesus knew their hatred of Himself, the Friend of the sisters, and knew that their wailing was hypocritical, and the emotion may well have been one of indignation.

34. *And said.* To put an end to the trying scene, Weiss suggests.

35. *Jesus wept.* Although He had already foretold that He should restore Lazarus to life (verse 11), His heart was touched with sympathy for the sisters. Compare Luke 19. 4.

36. *Then said the Jews.* R. V., *The Jews therefore said.* Some of the Jews; see the next verse.

37. *And.* R. V., *But. Which opened the eyes of the blind.* R. V., *who opened the eyes of him that was blind. Even this man should not have died.* R. V., *This man also should not die.* Their inference is that since He did not prevent the death of His friend, He could not, and this failure is a proof that He did not open the eyes of the blind man.

38. *Again groaning in himself.* See verse 33. Verse 37 interprets this emotion. *Grave.* R. V., *tomb.* See Gen. 23. 9; Matt. 27. 60. *It.* R. V., *Now it. Upon it.* R. V., *against it.* A pit would have the stone upon it, but a tomb cut vertically into a rock would have a stone against it.

39. *Said.* R. V., *saith. He stinketh.* R. V., *the body decayeth.* The Authorized Version is a literal translation of the Greek; the Revised, a paraphrase.

40. *Said I not.* See verses 23–26 and verse 4. *If thou wouldest believe.* R. V., *if thou believedst. The glory of God.* Seen in the restoration of Lazarus to life, and proving God's power in Christ.

41. *Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.* R. V., *So they took away the stone. Hast heard.* R. V., *Heardest.*

42. *The people which stand by.* R. V., *the multitude that standeth around. Hast sent.* R. V., *didst send.* Compare John 12. 29, 30.

43. *When he thus had spoken.* R. V., *When he had thus spoken.*

44. *And he.* R. V., *He. Grave-clothes.* R. V. margin, *grave-bands.* See John 19. 40.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

41. *Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest me.* Were you ever struck by a peculiarity in this prayer? Jesus thanks His Father for a boon which has not yet been given! He blesses God for a resurrection which has not yet been effected! "I thank Thee that Thou heardest me." How could Jesus say that? Lazarus was still in the grave! Why should the thanksgiving have preceded the harvest? Because the act of Jesus has a foundation in experience. Do you and I never say, in our letters to a friend, "Thanking you in anticipation"? When we feel sure that the thing will be agreeable to the friend's will. Jesus, too, was sure of this. He did not always feel this certainty; in Gethsemane He said, "Father, if it be possible." But here He had no doubt at all. What was this point on which He felt so sure of the Father's concurrence? He knew that the heart of His Father was ever averse to the claims of the grave. He was so sure of His Father's mind that He thanked Him in advance.

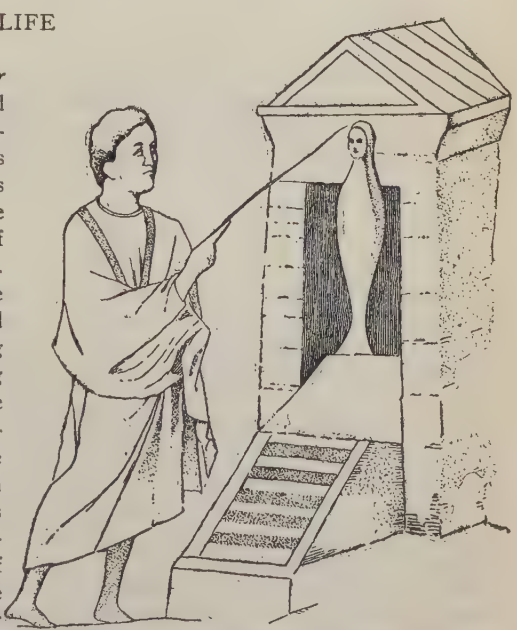
I, too, will thank Thee for my hallowed dead, O God! I will thank Thee in the absence of outward evidence — in the midst of the great silence! There has as yet come no resurrection mandate to my ear. I have heard no voice

which said, "Lazarus, come forth!" I have seen with the eye of sense nothing to tell me that the garments of the grave are a delusion. Yet the attitude of my soul will be one rather of thanksgiving than of prayer. *George Matheson, Times of Retirement.*

44. *He that was dead came forth.* Alike in its intrinsic importance, and in the effect it produced on the policy of the Sanhedrin, the raising of Lazarus may be regarded as the culmination of the Saviour's ministry. At first sight its absence from the Synoptic Gospels seems almost inexplicable. But we are less surprised at this when we remember (1) that the occurrence was not one which came within the cycle of events recorded in those Gospels, and (2) that they relate other miracles of a similar nature which are not contained in the Fourth Gospel (Mark 5. 32; Luke 7. 11). It is also to be borne in mind that in the preaching of the Gospel the significance of this miracle was completely overshadowed by that of Christ's own resurrection and death. Then the hostility of the Jewish authorities, which this miracle did so much to intensify, may have rendered it advisable for some time not to give the episode a place in the teaching of the catechists, lest it should involve Lazarus and his sisters in continued persecution (12. 10). In keeping with this is the fact that there is no mention of any member of the family by name either in Matthew or Mark, and although Luke introduces the names of the sisters into his narrative, he does not give the name of the village in which they resided (Luke 10. 38). *J. A. McClymont,* in *The New Century Bible.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

39. *He hath been dead four days.* It is a primitive oriental idea that the spirit of the deceased remains with, or hovers over, the body for several days after death. Three days are understood to be the limit of this lingering of the spirit. During these three days the spirit of the dead is deemed as in a sense within hearing of the body, and the wailing calls on the dead by the mourning relatives are repeated, accordingly, as at the hour of death. It would seem to have been in view of this oriental idea that Martha protested against the opening of her brother's grave, when he had already "been dead four days," and when, therefore, his body was beyond the hope of reviving. *H. Clay Trumbull, Studies in Oriental Social Life.*



A Representation in the Roman Catacombs of the Resurrection of Lazarus

43. *Lazarus, come forth.* The early Christians often picture the raising of Lazarus. The mummy-like figure of Lazarus in the arched door of a tomb is familiar to every student of Christian art. Our picture, a reproduction from a drawing in the Roman Catacombs, is a crude but typical example.

44. *He was bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes.* According to the Jewish custom of the time bodies were washed soon after death, besmeared and perfumed with spices, also embalmed in honey, then swathed in cloth, and wound round with bandages. *Lücke.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethany, the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, is on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, two miles from Jerusalem. Its modern name is el-Azariyah, the Arabic for "Place of Lazarus." The modern village consists of a few tumbled-down houses. The tomb of Lazarus and the house of Mary and Martha are pointed out to visitors, but, of course, their actual sites can not be known.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch when the Jews came to Him and said, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." "I have told you," Jesus answered, "and My works bear witness, but you do not believe. You are not among My sheep who know My voice and follow Me, whom My Father has given to Me." When Jesus added, "I and the Father are one," the Jews took up stones to kill Him. Calmly Jesus asked them for which of His good works they would stone Him. They would stone Him for blasphemy, they answered, because He made Himself God. Defending His claim by an argument based on the Old Testament Scripture and by the argument of His own works, Jesus somewhat calmed the excited Pharisees so that instead of stoning Him they attempted to arrest Him, but He escaped and crossed the Jordan to the place where John had baptized, and here many believed on Him. During the three months spent here in Perea occurred the events and discourses of Luke 11. 1–17. 10 — with the exception of 11. 14–13. 9.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The lesson to-day necessarily covers the entire eleventh chapter of John, and the story is so rich in graphic touches, so powerful in its own human interest, so important in its bearing on the Life Everlasting, that there can be no better beginning of the lesson for younger pupils than the first part of the story itself, as told in the first thirty-one verses of the chapter. See the Lesson Briefly Told.

For Older Pupils. With the fifth chapter of John we began our Evangelist's account of the growth of the Jews' unbelief in Jesus and of their bitter hatred which culminated in their determination to put Him to death. In chapters 5–11 are recorded three miracles in Judea and one in Galilee; each gave rise to exciting discussions and fierce antagonisms, and each furnished Jesus an occasion for revealing the nature of His divine claims. We

have seen how the healing of the infirm man at Bethesda led to the charge against Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, and to His assertion of His equality and authority with the Father; we have seen how the miracle of feeding the five thousand led to the discourse in which He proclaimed Himself the Bread of Life; we have seen how the restoring of sight to the blind man led to His declaration of Himself as the Light of the world; and in the raising of Lazarus we see that the miracle was the occasion of His declaring Himself the Resurrection and the Life.

The raising of Lazarus has been called Christ's crowning miracle. It was deliberately planned for four days before it was accomplished. The events connected with no other miracle are so vividly told; no other miracle shows so fully Christ's tenderness and sympathy. It is the last before the miracle of His own resurrection, and with the exception of this greatest of all miracles, it is the climax of all the signs which were told to prove "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I am the Resurrection and the Life

Christ brought Life and Immortality to Light. Whilst human instinct and reason declare for immortality, the subject at last is left in deep uncertainty. Whilst we listen to human reason and testimony we feel that it may be illogical, fanciful, mistaken, we may be the dupes of our imagination, it may be nothing more than guess work and illusion, all is vague, confused, unsatisfying. But when Christ comes all is changed. He makes eternity a fact; He looks, He breathes immortality. You can not come into contact with Him without tasting the powers of the world to come, and feeling the eternal hope awake in your soul. He brought life and immortality to light. We pass from dubious twilight to clear day, to knowledge, assurance, hope. It is the same change that we witness when we see alchemy changed into chemistry, when we see astrology changed into astronomy; a vague, wavering, visionary speculation passes into a definite, demonstrated, fruitful science. In Christ the dream becomes a reality, the inference a certainty, the desire knowledge and experience. In Christ at last the race attains the clear consciousness of its high nature and its vast destiny. *W. L. Watkinson, Noon-day Addresses.*

What is Eternal Life? The question whether an endless life would really be a blessing depends on what we have with which to fill an endless life. Suppose a man should begin life in some other world at exactly the point at which he ends it here, yet freed from the limitations of physical existence. How long, do you think, would the activities which he has enjoyed in this world continue to be satisfying? For how many centuries would a man care to make money? How many millenniums would it be interesting to be a fashionable woman? How far into eternity would a youthful life of fun and frolic be delightsome? The serious question is whether some of us could use an eternal life.

Jesus said to the Jews, in effect, as He would say to our generation: "You are fundamentally mistaken in your idea of eternal life. It is not length but depth, it is not quantity but quality, it is a kind of life to be lived here and now, and to endure forever, simply because such a life is, in the nature of the

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
California

case, indestructible." What Jesus meant by life was seen in the fair dealing in the little shop at Nazareth, and in the kindliness of the home life in the house of Joseph and Mary; in the truth that characterized all His intercourse with men, and the graciousness of His loving ministry; in His personal soul-purity, and the uninterrupted sense of oneness with the Father.

When Jesus offers eternal life, He is not simply promising immortality. He is promising that which alone can make immortality desirable,— a true quality of being. To men in full physical and intellectual vigor He said: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

People speak of making the best of both worlds. That is Jesus' intention for us. He will enable us to know the best that is here, and living for the best, we shall inevitably live forever. *Editorial* in *Sunday School Times.*

II Christ as a Friend

Christ and the Bethany Home. With the tender memories of that village home is enshrined the holy, human sympathy of Christ. His love for man is made intense and personal by His love for Martha and Mary and Lazarus. As we study Christ's relations in that Bethany home, we see Christ there as the genial Friend, when, with a touch of half playful humor He rebuked, if one may use a word so strong, the anxious worriment of Martha, busy with her household cares. Next we see Him as the sympathetic Friend, when in the hour of their great affliction He came to them and mingled His tears with theirs at the grave of Lazarus. Third, we behold Him as the divine Friend, when with voice of divine authority He declared Himself the Resurrection and the Life and commanded Lazarus to come forth. Fourth, we behold Him as the grateful Friend, when with imperishable words of gratitude He acknowledged Mary's act of devotion in breaking over Him the precious spikenard.

Combine these qualities,— geniality, sympathy, gratitude, and divine helpfulness,— and they reveal the intense and beautiful humanness of Christ's relations with those He loved. *Donald Sage Mackay.*

Christ and We. "What is the secret of your life?" asked Mrs. Browning of Charles Kingsley, "Tell me, that I may make mine beautiful, too." "I had a friend," he replied. This is Kingsley's definition of a friend: —"One human soul whom we can trust utterly; who knows the best and worst of us, and who loves us in spite of all our faults; who will speak the honest truth to us while the world flatters us to our face, and laughs at us behind our back; who will give us counsel and reproof in the day of prosperity and self-conceit; but who will comfort and encourage us in the day of difficulty and sorrow, when the world leaves us to fight our battle as we can."

Christianity has been defined as "Friendship with Christ." The secret of the strong, beautiful lives we see is that they have had Christ for their Friend; like them, we may make our lives beautiful, too. Our divine Friend is all that Kingsley claims for his human friend, all that and much besides that no human friend can be.

A good friend makes us wish to be at our best while with him. This is preeminently the mark of our divine Friend. We can no longer be content to live on low levels, we are dissatisfied with a thoughtless, selfish existence, our aspirations are aroused, our desires are awakened, our efforts quickened, till we slowly mount to higher and higher planes of life where we are a little

more worthy of His divine Friendship. "I was common clay till roses were planted in me," says the aromatic earth in an oriental fable. We are sadly aware that we are but common clay, but we are joyously aware, too, that we may become very different from our present selves under the close companionship with Christ. He took an ordinary fisherman and made him His beloved disciple; He took a Saul who was "the rising hope" of the exclusive Jewish rabbis, and made of him a Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

In the farewell discourse to His disciples Christ has given some of the conditions of friendship with Him. If we are His friends, we shall do what He commands, He tells us; if we love Him we shall keep His words; if we love Him we shall love one another, even as He has loved us; if we abide in Him, we shall bear much fruit. We lightly take the name of Christian, but a Christian is one who is Christ-like, who is in friendship with Christ. How can we claim Him for our Friend if we do not go to Him often in the spirit of personal love and personal fellowship, if we do not obey His commands, if we do not love one another, if we do not show by our fruit that we are abiding in Him?

III Jesus wept

Christ's Sympathy. "Puppy!" exclaimed Dr. Johnson contemptuously as he threw aside Dr. Harwood's *Liberal Translation of the New Testament,* on discovering that the translator had changed "Jesus wept" into "The Saviour of the world burst into a flood of tears." Luther's translation is an idiomatic German expression equivalent to "Jesus' eyes overflowed with tears." There are no words that can take the place of our English version, the two words which are so full of meaning. Much fault has been found with the way in which the Bible has been divided into verses, but some one has said that he can forgive all the unfortunate divisions for the sake of this one fortunate one that gives us these two words in a single verse.

In Christ's sympathy for the sorrowing sisters of Bethany, in the tears He shed over the city of Jerusalem, in the deeds of compassion and words of loving interest and sympathy that so crowded the three short years of His public ministry, in the very life He lived as "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," we see revealed the grief and the sympathy of God for all mankind.

"If I were God," said Goethe, "the woes of the world I had created would break my heart." An eloquent writer has told us how a similar thought came to him. He explored the slums of a great city; saw the poor in their wretched, dark and ill-ventilated tenements, saw them in all their misery and squalor and disease and sin, and it made him cry out, "How does the heart of God stand it? Why doesn't the heart of God break?" Then he saw little children suffering from neglect and hunger, saw them eagerly gathering scraps of decayed fruit from the gutters, and again he asked, "Why doesn't the heart of God break?" And then, he tells us, when his whole soul was burdened inexpressibly, he saw a vision and heard a voice. He saw Jesus poor and hungry and homeless, he followed Him as He went up to Jerusalem for the last time, and as he beheld Him on the cross he seemed to hear a tender voice saying, "God's heart is broken. It broke yonder on Calvary."

Sympathy is knowing how Others feel. A cripple on a street car found he had forgotten his change, and offered to send it later to the con-

ductor. "None of that game," said the latter as he rang the bell to stop the car. The passengers looked with mild interest to see the cripple put off, but a lame newsboy exclaimed, "I know how yer feel, mister. I guess I can lend yer five cents." I know how you feel! Those words express the secret of genuine sympathy. When we are suffering severe pain we do not expect understanding sympathy from one who has never known what an ache or a pain is. When some terrible grief comes to us we know that only those who have passed through grief of their own can realize what we are suffering. "I am sorry," wrote a friend to another who was mourning the loss of a father, "but I can not understand your sorrow, for I lost my father before I knew him and I have never known what it means to lose a friend." We could not tell our troubles and griefs to God and hope to receive comfort and strength to bear them if we did not know from Jesus' life that there is a divine sympathy for every human need.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Christ's calmness was never coldness.

To live for to-day is in the noblest sense to live for eternity. *D. J. Burrell.*

The greatest sorrow in life for beings like ourselves would be to have no sorrow. *William L. Watkinson.*

If you would have the gift of sympathy you must be content to pay the price; like Him, you must suffer. *F. W. Robertson.*

O love divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earth-born care;
We smile at pain while Thou art near. *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

As we must spend time in cultivating earthly friendships if we are to have their blessings, so we must spend time in cultivating the companionship of Christ. *Henry Drummond.*

Faith overleaps the confines of our reason,
And if by faith, as in old times was said,
Women received their dead
Raised up to life, then only for a season
Our partings are, nor shall we wait in vain
Until we meet again! *Longfellow.*

I know there is such a thing as loving Christ as a Friend, as a Brother; and that there is no other love that is so sweet, so deep, so lasting, so wondrous, as that which the soul can bear toward Him. *H. W. Beecher.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Prov. 18. 24.

Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. Rom. 12. 15.

He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Isa. 53. 3.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Dan. 12. 2.

Blessed be the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. 2 Cor. 1. 3.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

The Jews who stood by, criticizing and hating Jesus in their hearts, unable to see in Him the Messiah, were the ones on whom in reality death had fallen rather than Lazarus whose physical life was ended.

In Mark 3. 14 we read, "And He appointed twelve that they might be with Him." That little preposition *with* is the secret of the disciples' and Jesus' friendship. I am striving to be a disciple of Jesus; I must be with Him more that through fellowship I may attain to friendship with Him.

The sisters sent a message to Jesus that Lazarus was dead, and yet He came not to them for several days. They must have thought that He was indifferent to their sorrow. I know that God's love for me is wise, and though I may suffer, I will trust that all things shall work together for good in God's own time.

Am I indifferent to the sorrows of others? The beautiful gift of sympathy may be mine through attention and intention. Jesus always did something for those with whom He sympathized. Do I?

Does my life indicate that I am worthy of eternal life?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

"He whom Thou lovest is sick," was the message which came to Jesus in Perea from Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus. They believed that Jesus would start at once for Bethany without being asked, but He told His disciples that Lazarus' illness was for the glory of God and of Himself, and tarried where He was two days longer. Then He proposed going back to Judea, but His disciples remonstrated, reminding Him of the danger of going where the Jews had so lately sought to stone Him. He assured them that His life was safe as long as God had work for Him to do, and added that He must go to awaken Lazarus out of sleep. His disciples took His words literally; if Lazarus was sleeping he would recover. Jesus then told them plainly that Lazarus was dead, and that for the sake of their faith He was glad He had not been there. He invited them to go with Him, and Thomas, despondent yet loyal and brave, said to the others, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

When Jesus reached the neighborhood of Bethany He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Martha met Him on the way and exclaimed in her sorrow, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died. And even now," she added, "I know that whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee." "Thy brother shall rise again," returned Jesus. "Yes, in the resurrection at the last day," Martha answered, but she seemed to find little comfort in this far distant future hope. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," answered Jesus authoritatively; "those who die believing on Me shall live through My life-giving power, and over the eternal life within the living who believe on Me, death shall have no dominion. Believest thou this?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God," answered Martha; His power she will not limit.

Martha then hurried back to Bethany and summoned Mary with the glad words, "The Teacher is here and calleth thee." Mary was surrounded by friends, some of whom had come from Jerusalem, and when she left them so

hastily they thought she was going to Lazarus' tomb to mourn there, and they followed to be with her. On meeting Jesus Mary fell down at His feet and uttered the words of Martha, the thought which had been with them so constantly, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Troubled by her weeping and indignant at the weeping Jews whose black thoughts of hatred he could read, Jesus put an end to the scene by asking where they had laid Lazarus. They brought Him to the tomb, and there — Jesus wept, for very human was the divine Saviour. Some of the Jews said, "Behold how He loved him;" but others said, "Could He not have prevented this death if He could open the eyes of the blind man?"

Jesus ordered the stone before the tomb to be taken away, but Martha objected, for her brother had been dead four days and she shrank from having the decaying body exposed. Seeing that she had not learned the lesson He had already tried to teach her, Jesus told her again that she was to see the glory of God manifested through the power of the Son. Because He would teach those standing by to see in the miracle He was about to perform a sign that He was sent of God, Jesus lifted His eyes and uttered a prayer of gratitude to God for hearing Him, and then commanded Lazarus to come forth. And Lazarus came forth, bound as he was with the grave-bands. "Loose him, and let him go," said Jesus. Here the story of the miracle ends, and the joy of the reunited family we can only imagine.

"Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of the Evangelist."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE-CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Our duty to the bystander. Verse 42.

2. What is eternal life? The Eternal is not opposed to the Temporal, but to the Visible; it is not a period, but a condition; not a locality, but a state; not a thing of the future, but of the forever: let us live with the sense of it about us now, and then we can not live those utterly dreary, empty, idle, unprofitable, vicious lives which we sometimes see. *F. W. Farrar.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Where had Jesus been since the raising of Lazarus? (John 11. 54; Luke 17. 11–19, 28.) 2. Read the three accounts of the anointing of Jesus in Bethany in Matt. 26. 6–13, Mark 14. 3–9, and John 12. 1–11, and write in your own words an account containing them all. 3. At whose house was the supper given? (Mark 14. 3.) 4. With verse 8 compare Deut. 15. 11. 5. Why was there no waste in Mary's deed? 6. What prediction did Jesus make in regard to her fame? (Matt. 26. 13.) 7. Tell the story of another anointing of Jesus. (See Luke 7. 36–50.) 8. What is known concerning Judas' life and death? See Judas Iscariot, in the Subject-Index of your Bible. 9. While Jesus tarried in Bethany what were the Jews in Jerusalem saying about Him? (John 11. 55–57.)

LESSON III — APRIL 19

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

John 12. 1–11. Commit verse 3.

Golden Text

We love Him because He first loved us. I John 4. 19.

LESSON TEXT John 12. 1–11 TIME April 1, A. D. 30

1 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.
2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.
3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.
4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son,* which should betray him,
5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?
6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.
7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.
8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.
9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.
10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;
11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Then Jesus.* R. V., *Jesus therefore.* On His way to Jerusalem from Ephraim. *Six days before the passover.* Reckoning the day on which the paschal supper was eaten as one of the six, as was the Jewish custom, six days before would be Saturday, the day before the triumphal entry. *Which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.* R. V., *whom Jesus raised from the dead.*

2. *There they made him a supper.* R. V., *So they made him a supper there.* See Mark 14. 3. This supper seems to be placed by Matthew and Mark two days only before the crucifixion. In connection with this note of the time of Jesus' arrival in Bethany (verse 1), John may have narrated an event which occurred later, in order not to interrupt the account of the last days of Jesus in Jerusalem, or, as is generally assumed to be the case, the Synoptic writers may have narrated it out of its chronological order so as to present it as the final motive for Judas' deed. *Martha served.* See Luke 10. 38. *Sat.* R. V., margin, *reclined. At the table.* R. V., *at meat.*

3. *Then took Mary.* R. V., *Mary therefore took. Spikenard.* R. V., *pure*

nard. There are two words in the Greek, νάρδου πιστικῆς, and the meaning of the second word is disputed. It is thought by some to mean *liquid,* and by others to be the name of a district whence the nard came. Perhaps Mary had purchased this ointment for the embalmment of her brother. *Anointed the feet.* His head also, see Matt. 26. 7.

4. R. V., *But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that should betray him, saith.* See Matt. 26. 8 and John 6. 71.

5. *Pence.* R. V., *shillings.* "The word in the Greek denotes a coin worth about eight pence halfpenny, or nearly seventeen cents." Margin of Revised Version.

6. *This he said, not that.* R. V., *Now this he said, not because. He was a thief.* Probably this was not known at the time. *And had the bag, and bare what was put therein.* R. V., *and having the bag took away what was put therein.* The Greek verb ἐβάσταζεν is in the imperfect tense, and denotes a customary act; it may mean either "was wont to carry" or "was wont to take away, purloin."

7. R. V., *Jesus therefore said, Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying.* Compare Matt. 26. 12 and Mark 14. 8.

8. *The poor always ye have.* R. V., *the poor ye have always.* The poor shall never cease out of the land, Deut. 15. 11.

9. *Much people of the Jews therefore knew.* R. V., *the common people therefore of the Jews learned.* The pilgrims on their way to the passover feast.

10. *Consulted.* R. V., *took counsel.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. *Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him.*

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears. *Tennyson, In Memoriam.*

3. *Mary therefore took a pound of ointment, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus.* Some persons are haunted by a suspicion that in so far as you exalt the emotions of Christianity you undermine its reality. They prefer the ten words of Moses as recorded in the Pentateuch to their interpretation in the Sermon on the Mount, and are more at home among the proverbs of Solomon than with the parables of Jesus. Both the rhetoric of the prophets and the imagery of Jesus have been a perplexity to them, and they are never content until the clusters of grapes have been stripped from the branches and the riches thereof bottled in creeds. They do not understand that emotion can

bring us into regions of truth which reason can not reach, and that a parable of Jesus may be quite as much in touch with fact and therefore quite as true as an article in a confession. Instead of poetry being less charged with truth than prose it is the other way, for poetry comes in where prose has given up the struggle. If truth be perfectly commonplace then it may be stated in the most prosaic style, but there are truths, especially in religion, which defy ordinary means of expression because they are so subtle and spiritual.

Other people are apt to suspect that emotion is an alternative to action, but emotion rightly directed is the highest motive power. What can never be accomplished by the most convincing argument or the keenest sense of duty can be wrought by the impulse of love. A mother will make sacrifices which no one can ask of a nurse; the best drilled conscript will never touch the heroism of a patriot fighting for home. First there is the emotion which sets men's hearts on fire, and then there is the deed. Christianity obtained her martyrs and won her victories, not because men reasoned that Christ was the Son of God, or concluded that His law was the most perfect righteousness, but because multitudes of ordinary people loved Him with all their heart and were prepared to die for Him. When women like Mary gave the best that they possessed to Christ in the hour of His defeat, and before He was crucified poured over Him the spikenard of their love, the future of Christianity was securely assured, and Christ already had ascended His throne. *John Watson, The Inspiration of Our Faith.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

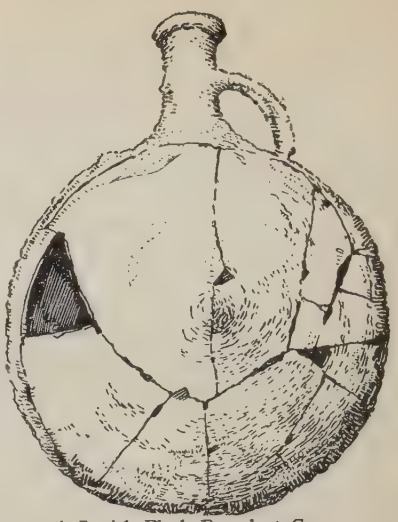
2. *So they made him a supper there.* The word which is here translated *supper* is derived from the same root as the word *evening,* and it is the principal meal of the day in Syria. Oriental churches observe the Saturday which precedes Palm Sunday as the anniversary of that *aasha,* and call it "The Sabbath of Lazarus." On that day the people make bread-offerings in the churches, and the native school-children in a body, led by their teachers, visit every home and perform a sort of play based on the facts recorded in John 11. The play is in Arabic verse, and they read it from a parchment. The actors represent Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. *Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie,* in *Sunday School Times.*

Family gatherings were very common among the Jews, and entertainments in honor of special guests were by no means infrequent. It was the established custom for the friends of a man who had recovered from a severe illness to celebrate the event with a feast. Such gatherings were almost public affairs, for the villagers were wont to come in uninvited and look on at the festivities. The guests left their sandals at the door. Leaning on their left elbows, they reclined on low couches on either side of a long, low table in the center of the room. Servants placed a basin under their feet and then poured water over them, and special honor was shown a guest by pouring a fragrant oil upon his head.

3. *Mary took a pound of ointment.* It was not in a bottle out of which she might take the stopper and let a carefully measured quantity dribble out, reserving the rest. But it was in a hermetically sealed casket or flask, out of which, if she let one drop fall, the whole must go. It had to be broken; it had to be devoted to one sole use. It could not be in part reserved or in part diverted to other uses. *Marcus Dods.*

5. *Three hundred shillings.* The denarius (translated penny, or shilling), the chief silver coin of the Romans, was in use in Palestine at this time. A Roman soldier or a laborer received a denarius as his day's wages.

6. *He had the bag.* This word was applied originally to a box for keeping the mouth-piece of wind instruments. The historian Josephus applies it to the coffer in which the golden mice and emerods were preserved (1 Sam. 6. 11). In the Septuagint, it is used for the chest which Joash provided for receiving contributions for the repairing of the Lord's house (2 Chron. 24. 8). The Revised Version gives *box* in the margin. *Vincent, Word Studies.*



A Jewish Flask Found at Gezer

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Since the miracle of our last lesson Jesus went northward to Ephraim, on the borderland between Judea and Samaria, then across the Jordan into Perea, southward to the ford opposite Jericho, across the Jordan once more to Jericho, and southward again to Bethany, where the anointing by Mary took place.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Many of those who saw Lazarus raised from the dead believed in Jesus as the Christ, but those who were hostile to Him reported the event to the Pharisees in Jerusalem. The chief priests and the Pharisees met in council. "If we let Him alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation," they declared, and then Caiaphas, the high priest, counseled that it was "expedient that one man should die for the people." They gave orders that whoever knew where Jesus was should make it known that they might arrest Him. Jesus meanwhile had gone to Ephraim, a city north of Jerusalem. Now occurred the events and discourses of Matt. 19 and 20; Mark 10, and Luke 17. 11–19. 28. As the time of the passover approached, the Jews flocked to Jerusalem, and the question was often debated there whether or not Jesus would appear in the temple as at former passovers.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The marvelous story of how Jesus brought Lazarus to life after he had been in the tomb four days has been repeated from one to another till every one in Jerusalem is talking about Jesus and wondering whether or not He will come to the passover. They know that the rulers have determined to put Him to death if He comes, and some are hoping He will stay away, while others are eager to see what the rulers will really do.

Jesus started for Jerusalem, and on His way stopped at a home in Bethany. Whom in this home did He love? Many people in Bethany wished to honor Jesus in some way, and a man called Simon the Leper, whose leprosy Jesus had no doubt cured, gave a feast and invited friends to meet Jesus. Who were among the guests? The villagers were there full of excitement at seeing Jesus again. Lazarus was there, quiet and thoughtful. Martha was busily engaged in helping the host care for so many people. Jesus' thoughts were far different from those of the others: before Him He saw the cross toward which He was hastening. Judas was thinking how different his life with Jesus had been from what he had expected, how disappointed he was that Jesus had not been made a king, and how he hated the life and even the Master. Mary's heart was overflowing with gratitude and love to Jesus for restoring her brother to life, and as she looked at her beloved Teacher she wondered how she could show Him her love. What did she do?

For Older Pupils. On the first day of a New Year Marie Bashkirtseff wrote in her diary: "It is the New Year. At the theater I wished my wish in a single word, intoxicating whether it be written or spoken — Fame!" Fame came to her, but not the sort of fame that is lasting. During the first week of the Jewish sacred year Mary of Bethany wished her wish; it was for the opportunity to show in some way the depth of her love and gratitude to her Saviour. No thought of fame had she, but the beautiful deed she had opportunity to do made her famous for all time among all people. "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her," prophesied Christ.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Hypocrisy

The Hypocrisy of Judas. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?" Judas questioned, and the other disciples seem to have chimed in with him, for Luke attributes the fault-finding to all of them. "To what purpose is this waste," they said. Dr. Dawson suggests that if they had said, "This feast might have been given to the poor; at the cost of this feast a hundred beggars might have been fed," we might have respected their motives, but they applied the word *waste* to a gift inspired by love so beautiful that they were totally incapable of understanding it. "It was cant," he rightly affirms, "unconscious cant, perhaps, but still cant. It was cant to talk of the poor at such a time: did they pretend that they loved the poor better than Jesus, that their thoughts were more generous than His, who from the first moment of His ministry had sided with the poor, had defended and loved them, and had been the first to bring them a real gospel of help? It was cant to talk of waste in a gift given to Him who had given His life for men."

The Evangelist adds his own note of explanation, that Judas spoke thus, "not because He cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein." Had the three hundred shillings been put in his possession as treasurer of the company, he could have helped himself to some of it, thinks John. "Hypocrisy is the homage which vice renders to

virtue," says La Rochefoucauld, and with Homer in *The Iliad* virtue says of one who pays such homage as this:

"Hateful to me as are the gates of hell,
Is he who, hiding one thing in his heart,
Utters another."

The Meaning of Sincerity and Hypocrisy. Our word *sincerity* is derived from two Latin words, *sine,* without, and *cera,* cement. When the ancient sculptors of Rome chanced to work on a piece of marble that had a flaw, or when their chisels missed their aim, they were wont to fill the chink with cement, and so cleverly did they do this that it was not perceptible at first. After a time, however, heat or dampness would reveal the deceit. Thus it came to pass that when a work of art was ordered, the purchaser added a clause to the contract stating that it was to be *sincera,* without cement. Sincerity is the root of many other virtues. Confucius declared it to be "the beginning and end of things."

Hypocrisy translates the Greek word, ὑποκρισις, which meant at first merely *acting.* The hypocrite was one who acted a part on the stage in ancient Greece. Roscius, the greatest comic actor of Rome, praised his pupil Cicero by calling him a hypocrite. Since acting is usually for deceitful ends, the transition in meaning to dissimulation was simple. No one now feels complimented when called a hypocrite.

A native of Madagascar gave William Ellis, the noted missionary, a definition of hyprocrisy which showed he thoroughly understood the meaning of the word. Mr. Ellis was translating the Bible into the Malagasy language and could find no word to express this. He explained the idea to the people and asked them what word could be used. "I know, I know," said this native, "it is to put a clean mat over a dirty floor."

II How to measure Values

A Lesson from David. David once expressed a wish for a drink of water from the well at the gate of Bethlehem. He had sought refuge in the cave of Adullam and Bethlehem was in the hands of the Philistines. Three of his mighty men of war heard his wish, and at the peril of their lives they broke through the Philistine host, filled a cruse with the coveted water, and brought it back to David. As he looked into the faces of his friends and thought of the perils they had braved to gratify his whim, he could not drink that water. Solemnly he poured it out upon the ground, a votive offering to the Lord, saying: "Shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. My God forbid it me that I should do this." This simple act can not be compared in seeming importance with David's many victories in warfare, yet for us it is freighted with far weightier meaning than are all his deeds of valor. It is the Old Testament story which, like the New Testament story of Mary's anointing Christ with the precious nard, makes us ask ourselves how we measure values. David's story teaches that some things may cost too much; Mary's, that nothing may be too precious for some uses.

The Right Valuation. Mary's token of affection took the company by surprise. Jesus was a poor Man, and His very appearance may have suggested that there were other things He needed more urgently than such a gift as this.

Had the family provided a home for Him or given Him the price of this ointment, no one would have uttered a remark. But this was the kind of demonstration reserved for princes or persons of great distinction, and when paid to One so conspicuously humble in His dress and habits there seemed to the uninstructed eye something incongruous. . . .

For herself, Mary pronounces that no tribute is rich enough to pay Him. It is the rarity of such action, not the rarity of the nard, that strikes Jesus. This, He says, is a noble deed she has done, far rarer, far more difficult to produce, far more penetrating and lasting in its fragrance, than the richest perfume that man has compounded.

Actions which have no immediate results are pronounced by persons like Judas to be mere sentiment and waste, while in fact they redeem human nature and make life seem worth living. The charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava served none of the immediate purposes of the battle, and was indeed a blunder and waste from one point of view, yet are not our annals enriched by it as they have been by few victories?

There are thousands of persons who think it essential to teach children arithmetic, but pernicious to instill into their minds a love of poetry or art. They judge of education by the test, Will it pay? Can this attainment be turned into money? The other question, Will it enrich the nature of the child and of the man? is not asked. They proceed as if they believed that the man is made for business, not business for the man; and thus it comes to pass that everywhere among us men are found sacrificed to business, stunted in their moral development, shut off from the deeper things of life. The pursuits which such persons condemn are the very things which lift life out of the low level of commonplace buying and selling, and invite us to remember that man liveth not by bread alone, but by high thoughts, by noble sacrifice, by devoted love and all that love dictates, by the powers of the unseen, mightier by far than all that we see. *Marcus Dods.*

III Anoint the Living

She did it for My Burial. That word changes everything. The sunlight fades out, and a wave of infinite sadness rushes over the hearts of the feasters. In the great ceremonial feasts of Egypt it was customary when the mirth ran highest to introduce a train of mourners bearing a dead man on his bier, that the feasters might remember man was mortal. It is as though such a thing had happened in this house at Bethany. No throb of funeral music shook the air, indeed, no slow company of mourners passed through the chamber, following that dread effigy of silence on the lifted bier; but the effect was the same. An ineffaceable vision flashed upon all the feasters for an instant — they saw their Jesus dead. Who among them would grudge the dead His last anointing? What man among them would think frankincense and myrrh too precious for the dead Master? But they begrudged it to Him living — ah, it is there that the saying of Christ becomes so poignant. They grudged Him the gift of Mary as we grudge the frankness and tenderness of affection to those we love when they are with us — giving them scant words and cold glances, and little sympathy or consideration — until a day comes when all our words are spoken to deaf ears, and our tears fall fruitlessly upon a frozen forehead. "Oh, the anguish of the thought," says George Eliot in one of the most memorable and pathetic

passages of her writings, "that we can never atone to our dead for the stinted affection we gave them, for the little reverence we showed to that sacred human soul that lived so close to us, and was the divinest thing God had given us to know." *W. J. Dawson, The Reproach of Christ.*

Be merciful, O our God!
Forgive the meanness of our human hearts,
That never till the noble soul departs,
See half the worth, or hear the angel's wings
Till they go rustling heavenward as he springs
Up from the mourned sod. *Edward Rowland Sill.*

The Gift which All need may be cultivated. There is no one so strong and self-reliant that he does not need the help that comes from the knowledge that others believe in him and love him. A story in the Youth's Companion illustrates this truth. "In the winter of 1864, an old Quaker lady visited Lincoln at the White House, and took the long-suffering giant's down-stretched hand. She had to rise on tiptoe, and as she did it her sweet voice uttered some words difficult to catch. It is not possible to give the words of either exactly, but this is their purport: 'Yes, friend Abraham, thee need not think thee stands alone. We are all praying for thee. The hearts of all the people are behind thee, and thee can not fall. The Lord has appointed thee, the Lord will sustain thee, and the people love thee. Yea, as no man was ever loved before, does this people love thee. Take comfort, friend Abraham. God is with thee. The people are behind thee.' The effect of the words was easy to see. As when the lights suddenly blaze behind a cathedral window, so the radiance illumined those rugged features and poured from the wonderful eyes. The gaunt form straightened. The mouth became beautiful in its sweetness, as it said to her: 'You have given a cup of cold water to a very thirsty and grateful man. You have done me a great kindness.'"

There are those who feel that they are powerless to utter their thoughts, that they are unable to show themselves loving, or friendly, and though they regret this, they firmly believe that it can not be helped because it is their nature to live in the realm of silence. These very people may have been by nature selfish, yet as Christians they have recognized that selfishness is sin, and they have overcome this evil tendency. If they but recognized that there is a selfishness of words and thoughts as well as of deeds and things, that expressionlessness is also a sin, that it is their duty as Christians to give voice to words of love and appreciation that shall comfort and cheer, they could have overcome this also. It is our Christian duty not only to love but to be loving, to be generous not only with loving deeds but also with loving words.

SENTENCE SERMONS

It is not the emotion of admiration we want, but the act of adoration; not the gift, but the giving. *Ruskin.*

The name of charity covers a good many more sins than it can conceal. *Sunday School Times.*

The mole blames the eagle for soaring, and thinks grubbing and burrowing the only proper mode of action. *Alexander Maclaren.*

Reason may be the lever, but sentiment is the fulcrum and the place to stand on if you want to move the world. *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Don't be laid away at last as an unfired gun; demonstrate your right to be remembered by doing something worth remembering. *William Rader.*

To feel gratitude without showing it is perhaps no better than to show gratitude without feeling it. *Ivan Panin.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

If any man serve me, him will the Father honor. John 12. 26.

Who art thou that judgest thy neighbor? Jas. 4. 12.

But Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying. And verily I say unto you, wheresoever the Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. Mark 14. 6–9.

But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13. 13.

Be ye thankful. Col. 3. 15.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

"Thou art like the spirit which thou comprehendest," said Goethe. Do I comprehend Judas' criticism better than I do Mary's act?

I have often said to myself as I saw a beautiful act or heard kind words spoken, "Why didn't I think to do that, or why didn't I say that." The doer or speaker saw the opportunity because he was looking for it, because he was actuated by a loving heart, and "there is a sort of genius in love for discovering original ways of doing good." Before I can go and do likewise I must educate my heart. Mary had sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word, and of her Jesus had said, "She hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." From Mary I can learn how to educate my heart.

I know what it means to be made wretched because I have been misunderstood. I will not forget that I may misunderstand others, and if I can not see their motives I will be lenient in my judgment of their actions.

I will never let a noble impulse die unfulfilled for fear it may not be appreciated.

Jesus came to that feast in Bethany knowing full well what was before Him in the coming week, and yet He controlled His mental agony and appreciated the courtesies of His friends. What a wonderful lesson for those of us who allow our mental moods to spoil the good times of others!

I will never be a hypocrite.

Judas expressed the thought that came to the other disciples. We may not prevent a bird from alighting on our head but we may prevent its building a nest in our hair, some one has said. We may not be able to prevent a thought from coming into our mind but we can prevent its tarrying there, and we can prevent its receiving expression.

What kind words we speak of the dead, and how often his friends say, "If he only could have known how others regarded him!" I will not keep my words of appreciation for others till it is too late to do them any good.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Six days before the passover Jesus came to Bethany on His way to Jerusalem, and there they gave a supper for Him. Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, was there, and Martha, his sister, assisted in serving the guests. Mary, whom we know as the sister who was wont to sit at Jesus' feet listening to His words, showed her great love and gratitude by taking a pound of ointment of very precious nard and anointing the feet of Jesus and then wiping them with her hair. Judas deemed the ointment wholly wasted, and muttered, "Why was it not sold for three hundred shillings and given to the poor?" He did not care for the poor, the Evangelist explains, but he carried the bag in which the funds were put, and being a thief, he could have kept some of it himself. Jesus saw the love that was symbolized by the gift, and vindicated the generous giving. "Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying. For the poor ye have always with you (and whensoever ye will ye can do them good); but me ye have not always." What a solemn hush must have come over that gathering as He spoke thus plainly of the nearness of His death! But though they were troubled, they could not realize what the coming week would bring to pass.

The common people on learning that Jesus was in Bethany came there in great numbers to see Him and also to see Lazarus, the man who had been dead four days and then restored to life, and because of him many believed on Jesus. The chief priests therefore proposed putting Lazarus to death, for he was a living testimony to the power and divinity of Jesus.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Judas as an example of "graft."
2. "Martha and Mary, combined in one, would make a perfect Christian woman."
3. In Christ's words of commendation is the charter of all undertakings which propose in the name of Christ to feed the mind, to stir the imagination, to quicken the emotions, to make life less meager, less animal, less dull. *Peabody.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What does the phrase "Passion Week" mean? When did it begin? (Sunday, April 2, A. D. 30.) What happened the following Sunday? (Christ's resurrection.) 2. Tell about the preparation made for keeping the passover. (Mark 14. 12–16; Luke 22. 7–13.) 3. What were Jesus' words at the beginning of the passover supper? (Luke 22. 14–18.) 4. What led to Jesus' object lesson of washing the disciples' feet? (Luke 22. 24–30.) 5. What traits of character are shown by Peter in the next lesson? 6. On what other occasion did he rebuke the Master? (Matt. 16. 21–23.) 7. On what hospitable occasion were the feet of Jesus not washed according to custom, and what parable did He give? (Luke 7. 36–50.) 8. How can we follow Jesus' example of washing the disciples' feet? 9. Read the exhortation to lowliness of mind in Phil. 2. 1–11. 10. Give an account of the incidents and words at the Last Supper as narrated in Matt. 26. 21–35; Mark 14. 18–31; Luke 22. 21–38; and John 13. 21–38.

LESSON IV — APRIL 26

JESUS TEACHES HUMILITY

John 13. 1–15. (Read John 13. 1–20.) Commit vv. 3–5.

Golden Text

A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another as I have loved you. John 13. 34.

LESSON TEXT John 13. 1–15 TIME Thursday evening, April 16, A. D. 30

1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was
come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his
own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.
2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas
Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him;
3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and
that he was come from God, and went to God;
4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel,
and girded himself.
5 After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples'
feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.
6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost
thou wash my feet?
7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but
thou shalt know hereafter.
8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered
him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.
9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands
and *my* head.
10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet
but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.
11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all
clean.
12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was
set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?
13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.
14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to
wash one another's feet.
15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Now.* Thursday evening, the night before Jesus' crucifixion, in the upper room at Jerusalem. *When Jesus knew.* R. V., *Jesus knowing. His hour.* John 12. 23. *Depart.* The Greek verb μεταβῇ means "pass," as from one place or room to another. *His own.* His disciples. See also John 17. 20. *Which.* R. V., *that. Unto the end.* R. V. margin, *to the uttermost.*

2. *Supper being ended.* R. V., *during supper.* The Greek words δείπνου γενομένου mean literally, supper having come. We know from verses 12 and 26 that the supper was not over. *The devil.* "The rebuke at Bethany threw disloyalty and disappointment over into desire for revenge. Luke 22. 3. The

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street

action is as if now taken out of the hands of the man, and the devil rules him. His will is the slave of evil, and beyond his own control." *Reith. Now.* R. V., *already.*

3. *He was come from God, and went to God.* R. V., *He came forth from God, and goeth unto God.* See John 6. 3, 35; 8. 42.

4. *He riseth.* R. V., *ariseth.* They had already reclined at table, but no one of the disciples had performed the customary service of washing the feet. *Laid.* R. V., *layeth.* The verb is the historical present. *Garments.* His *tallith,* or outer garment. *Took.* R. V., *He took.* See Luke 22. 27.

5. *After that he poureth water into a bason.* R. V., *Then he poureth water into the basin.*

6. *Then cometh he.* R. V., *So he cometh. And Peter.* R. V., *He. Thou . . . my.* In the Greek the pronouns σύ μου, thou of me, are in emphatic contrast at the begining of the sentence. Compare John 1. 27.

7. *Know.* R. V., *understand. Hereafter.* Partly explained in verses 12–17.

8. *Thou shalt never.* Compare Matt. 16. 22. *No part with me.* No part in His fellowship and Kingdom. The washing was a symbol of the washing away of sins by the blood of the Lamb of God.

10. *Washed.* R. V., *bathed. Save to wash his feet.* An allusion to the fact that one returning from the public bath was clean except his feet, which needed to have the dust of the road washed off, and meaning in its application that one who was morally clean, who was true at heart, needed only to be cleansed from special faults which cling to him in his daily walk. *Not all.* Judas, unlike the other disciples, had not been bathed, he was false through and through. Jesus wished to tell Judas that He was known, and impel him to leave the gathering.

11. *Knew.* Compare 6. 64, 70. *Who.* R. V., *him that.*

12. *After.* R. V., *when. Had taken.* R. V., *taken. Was set.* R. V., *sat.* R. V. margin, *reclined. Know.* Know the meaning of the act.

13. *Master.* R. V., *Teacher.*

14. *Your Lord and Master.* R. V., *the Lord and the Teacher. Ye ought.* The Greek verb means *to owe,* and our word *ought* is the past tense of *owe. To wash one another's feet.* To serve others.

15. *Ye.* R. V., *ye also.* Compare John 15. 12.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

3. *"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth unto God—."* At this point wonder is excited. We wait almost breathlessly for the next sentence. Let us read it as our imagination might dictate it. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, unfolded secret wings and went up into the light; unveiled splendors which had been concealed under the guise of His flesh; called angels — host upon host, a dazzling throng — to bring the crown He had left in Heaven. This is our notion of greatness, of pomp, of circumstance. But, just as when the disciples asked who is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven, Jesus set a little child in the midst of them,— so when we ask, What will He do when the great mystery is revealing itself to Him? He does not any one of the supposed wonderful things which He might have done, but, knowing that the

Father had given all things into His hands, He began to wash the disciples' feet. *Theodore Parker, People's Bible.*

8. *Thou shalt never wash my feet.* It is the old, strange mixture of self-conceit and self-disgust,— the self-conceit of old, which under the shadow of Hermon had called upon him so stern a rebuke when he had said, "That be far from Thee, Lord; This shall not be unto Thee." The self-disgust which of old, on the Lake of Galilee, had flung him to his knees with that great cry wrung from his yearning heart, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, oh Lord." *F. W. Farrar.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *He began to wash the disciples' feet.* In Palestine the washing of feet was a necessity and one of the duties of hospitality. There were no pavements, no stockings were worn, and the shoes or the sandals, which were little more protection than would be the soles alone of our shoes, were removed on entering a house and left at the door. The hot limestone dust made the feet burn, and the cleansing with cooling water was refreshing as well as needful. Basin and ewer were kept ready for this purpose. The washing was performed by servants, or by the sons of the household as an affectionate duty, and was considered one of the humblest of services.

Oriental Ewer and Basin

13. *Ye call me Teacher.* No pupil (disciple) was allowed to call his teacher by his proper name. There were two titles of respect in customary use, Rabbi, meaning Master, and Mar, meaning Teacher.

15. *Ye also should do as I have done to you.* At first the example of Jesus in washing the disciples' feet was not followed literally, and His words, "If I have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet," were taken to mean that as He, their Lord and Teacher, had not hesitated to perform for them this humble service, so they ought to perform for others any Christian service in their power.

The day before Good Friday is called in the Catholic Church Maundy Thursday. The word *Maundy* comes from the Old English word *maunde,* a command, and it was derived from the Latin *mandatum.* After the time of the Apostles it was held by many that the command of Jesus should be fulfilled in the letter, and gradually the custom grew of performing the ceremony on the anniversary of this day. In the Greek Church it became one of its chief sacraments. "In the Greek convents and at the Russian court, it is yet observed with great solemnity. In the papal court, in those of Vienna, Munich, Madrid, Lisbon, and in the cathedrals and convents of the Roman Catholic Church, the command is also literally carried out to this day, the pope, emperor, kings, washing the feet of twelve persons, generally poor old men, who receive a small gratuity on the occasion. In Rome, the twelve representatives of the Apostles are seated in the Clementine Chapel, dressed in tunics of white woolen cloth, and the pope, attired in the same plain manner, sprinkles a few

drops on the right foot of each, then wipes and kisses it. After this a repast takes place, at which the pope, assisted by his cabinet, serves the twelve Apostles, who, at the close, are permitted to take away the white tunics, the towels with which their feet have been wiped, and a small piece of money."

"If you really wish to wash your neighbor's feet, see that your heart is really humble and help every one in becoming better," wisely admonished Luther.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On "Palm Sunday," the day following His anointing in Bethany, Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. At night He left the temple, crossed the brook Kidron and went over the Mount of Olives to Bethany again. Each night of this last week until His arrest was spent in Bethany. On His way to Jerusalem on Monday He spoke about the barren fig tree. In the temple He drove out those who were profaning it, as He had done early in His ministry. Tuesday was a busy day in Jerusalem. There is no record of any event on Wednesday, and perhaps the day was quietly spent at Bethany. When Thursday came the disciples made ready for the feast which they held in an upper room in Jerusalem. In the afternoon Jesus made His last journey from Bethany to Jerusalem.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A great multitude of passover pilgrims went out from Jerusalem to escort Jesus back with them from Bethany. They spread palm branches in the way and shouted, "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel," this fickle multitude who a few days later cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Jesus accepted their homage and rode into the city on a young ass. "Lo, the world is gone after Him," exclaimed the Pharisees.

The only event narrated by John between the triumphal entry and the Last Supper is the coming to Jesus of certain Greeks. Jesus saw them coming, an earnest of His sovereignty over the Gentile world, and in a last public discussion He said that He could be glorified only through His atoning death. A voice from Heaven strengthened Him for the fate before Him and was designed to strengthen the faith of the disciples. The chapter closes with the Evangelist's statement of the unbelief of the Jews and a re-statement of Jesus' mission to the world as its Light upon whose reception or rejection men's relation to the Father depends.

See Matt. 21. 18–26. 19; Mark 11. 12–14. 16; and Luke 19. 45–22. 13 for the events not given by John.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Once the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" And He called to Him a little child and placed him before them and said: "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." It was a hard lesson for the disciples to learn.

Some months later James and John came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of Thee," and when Jesus asked what was their request they replied, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand; and one on Thy left hand, in Thy glory." "Me first" was what each of them meant. When the other disciples heard how those two brothers wished to gain for themselves greater honor than should be given them, they were very indignant. Jesus then said: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." John learned the lesson at last, and when he wrote this Gospel that we are studying he did not care anything about being first, and never once spoke of himself by name.

On the last night of Jesus' life the disciples were with Him in an upper room at Jerusalem. The disciples had been disputing again as to which of them was the greatest one, and our lesson tells us how He showed them that one who is truly great is truly humble.

For Older Pupils. What is true humility? Do we not wrongly associate this virtue more with outward demeanor than with inward grace? What is self-respect? Can one possess both a spirit of self-respect and of humility? Is humility to be coveted? How may humility be attained? Is the humble man a successful man? Let us keep in mind our answers to these questions, and see whether we shall need to change any of them after studying Christ's lesson on this subject.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Humility

A Contrast to Jesus' Example. In his Essay on Worship, Emerson gives an illustration which may aptly be contrasted with Jesus' act at the Last Supper. Emerson is saying that we have "an ear which hears not what men say, but what they do not say." In a convent near Rome there was a nun who seemed to have rare gifts of inspiration and prophecy, and her abbess had reported to the Pope wonderful stories of her power. Philip Neri, a man of rare discernment, visited the Pope, and hearing about the nun volunteered to find out the truth of the reports. "He threw himself on his mule, all travel-stained as he was, and hastened through the mud and mire to the distant convent. He told the abbess the wishes of His Holiness, and begged her to summon the nun without delay. The nun was sent for, and as soon as she came into the apartment, Philip stretched out his leg, all bespattered with mud, and desired her to draw off his boots. The young nun, who had become the object of much attention and respect, drew back with anger, and refused the office: Philip ran out of doors, mounted his mule and returned instantly to the Pope: 'Give yourself no uneasiness, Holy Father, any longer: here is no miracle, for here is no humility.'"

What is Humility? "What is the first commandment of all?" asked a scribe, and Jesus gave him a comprehensive answer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." "Thou hast said the truth," returned the scribe, for he knew that if one loved God and his neighbor in this way he would keep all the commandments. What is the

greatest of all the virtues? is sometimes asked. Truth, honesty, temperance, patience, generosity, humility, justice,—one and all have their advocates, but is not humility, rightly regarded, at the base of most of the others? For humility is not so much a distinct virtue as it is an attitude of the soul. "It is the way in which we feel towards God, in which we regard ourselves and our fellows," says Dr. Watkinson; "towards God it implies the sense of reverence and dependence, and towards our fellows, deference, consideration, and helpfulness." One who reverences God and feels his dependence on Him, who is deferential and considerate and helpful towards his fellows, has the true spirit of humility, and possessing this will act aright toward God and also toward men. "Where humility lays deep the low-lying foundation," Christina Rossetti rightly says, "the superincumbent structure can safely and permanently tower toward Heaven."

False and True Humility. Said Epictetus: "If we accept the doctrine that God is the Father of all men in an especial manner, I suppose we should never have any ignoble thoughts about ourselves; but if Cæsar should adopt us into his family, none could endure our arrogance." The great philosopher was right in his distinction. Noble self-respect is the result of the knowledge that we are the children of God, and arrogance is often the result of connection with those whom the world calls great. If we accept the truth that God is the Father of all men in an especial manner we shall have ignoble thoughts neither about ourselves nor about others, for all alike are His children. The knowledge that we are made in the image of God makes us realize our worth, but the knowledge that we fall so far short of what He meant us to be makes us ashamed that our worth is so little. Comparing what we are with what we might be leaves us always humble.

False humility is that of a Uriah Heep whose outward maddening meekness and obsequiousness were really a pretence, assumed to further his own ambitious designs. True humility is that of a Charles V when he picked up Titian's pencil and said that he was proud to wait on his superiors. False humility is mockery; true humility is reality. Peter was arrogant when he allowed the other disciples and His Master to recline at the table without himself performing for them this service that was expected of some one; he was both humble and arrogant when he refused to let his Master do this service for him, humble in realizing his littleness as compared with Christ's greatness, but arrogant in assuming to rebuke the Lord; he was truly humble when he accepted the service and took the lesson to heart.

II A New Commandment

The Meaning of Our Golden Text. We read the words, "that ye love one another," and we recognize that this is no new word falling from the lips of Jesus. The disciples had already heard that message. Time and again had He repeated the ancient command of Israel in their ears. Moreover, in the parable of the Good Samaritan He had given such large interpretation to the word *neighbor* that they understood something of the breadth of the love that was demanded of them by Jesus. What, then, constitutes this command "A new commandment?"

A large part of the meaning of the passage we are liable to lose. We say of our friend, "I love him; he is my companion, my trusted friend, I love him."

Yet we know that love such as this can not be commanded. Or we apply it to that range of affections upon which the home is constituted, the love of husband for wife, of father for son, the love of the mother for her child. We can not be commanded so to love all men, we can not be commanded so to love our brethren in the Christian Church. And our Lord never laid that commandment upon us. We love our neighbor when we, like the good Samaritan, are willing not to pass by on the other side but to go where he is, and to put the arm of sympathy under his wounded head, and to lift him in his weakness to the bosom of our strength, and to pour the balm of comfort into his wounds, and to bear him to safety and shelter. We find that we love our neighbor when thus we seek his good,—that Jesus does not command from us a passionate affection, but commands us to enter into his life with sympathy and seek his welfare and minister unto him in love. Jesus means when He says, you should love one another, seek always the welfare of your brother. "Ah," you say, "you have taken the meaning out of that great word, what is there left in it?" Have I? Then you have never striven to live up to that commandment; take it home and live up to it for one week, and see if the meaning is gone from it when I say that Jesus says we shall always seek the welfare of our brother man.

But He has given us here the phrase that makes His word the new commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you." To what point are we to love our neighbor? Up to the point of sacrifice. That is what Jesus did. "Love one another as I have loved you." Seek always, consistently, the welfare of your brother's life, and seek it till it hurts. "As I have loved you," said Jesus when the shadow of Gethsemane was falling on His brow, and when there was graven before Him in feature of flame the dread figure of the cross. Because we have divested the word love of those associations of sentiment and of affection which cluster around the word in our ordinary usage of it, will you not bear witness with me that we have deepened and strengthened its claim upon the human heart, when we interpret it to mean, "Thou shalt consistently seek the welfare of thy brother's life up to the point of sacrifice?" *Rockwell H. Potter.*

Wonderful Love. It is said that Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock's usual words of greeting to friend or stranger were, "What can I do for you?" and that the words expressed the whole spirit and action of his life. His love was akin to his Master's, a love that ever sought expression in helpful service for others.

In *Pioneering on the Congo* Mr. Holman Bentley tells a story that illustrates the effect of such brotherly love. A missionary had tried to gain the good will of an old negro king by making him presents of clothes, beads, and magical toys. He let him have a site for his house but would give no heed to his teachings. A famine came, and the missionary found a poor little slave that had been left to starve by his owner. He took him home, fed and cared for him, nursed him through a long illness, and when he died buried him with every mark of respect and honor. Then the old king made a speech to his people, and said: "This man nursed poor Tempe, and helped him, and when he died buried him as if he had been his uncle, in a lot of warm clothes, and fenced in his grave. I know of it all. There is something in it that is wonderful. I can not understand it."

By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another.

III CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

A Warning. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.

"Thus speaketh Christ, our Lord, to us:
'Ye call me Master, and obey me not;
Ye call me Light, and see me not;
Ye call me Way, and walk me not;
Ye call me Life, and desire me not;
Ye call me Wise, and follow me not;
Ye call me Fair, and love me not;
Ye call me Rich, and ask me not;
Ye call me Eternal, and seek me not;
Ye call me Gracious, and trust me not;
Ye call me Noble, and serve me not;
Ye call me Mighty, and honor me not;
Ye call me Just, and fear me not;
If I condemn you, blame me not.'"

Only One Pattern to follow. An iron foundry is an interesting place for us to visit. Here are men carefully sifting damp sand over patterns of various kinds, which are held in their places by frames of wood; with delicate touch they pack the sand closely around the pattern as it lies in the rigid box. Every little curve and ridge in the pattern must feel the touch of the cold particles of sand pressing upon them. By and by the pattern will be very slowly and carefully lifted out of its place, and the form it made in the sand will be filled full of hot and steaming metal, just from the great vessel in which it was melted. When this cools, there, in the place where the pattern once rested, lies the wheel or the axle, the pulley or the shaft, which the inventor had in mind when he made the first form of wood.

Suppose you say to the molder as you pass along, "It all depends upon the pattern, doesn't it? If that is not right the result is imperfect."

"That's very true," he will say. "And there is only one pattern for every piece. We must be careful that we have the right one before we begin our work."

In the better life the Father has set us only one single pattern. Many good men has He sent into the world, but of only One has He said, "This is My only begotten Son: hear ye Him." The one Pattern which is always right is the Man of Nazareth. Following Him we can not fail because God will not let us fail. *Edgar L. Vincent.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Jesus came from God, not leaving Him, and went to God, not leaving us. *Bernard.*

The devil allows no Christian to reach Heaven with clean feet all the way. *Luther.*

It is better to be dusty than dirty, but it is best to be neither. *C. M. Lamson.*

He who needs washing needs wringing. *Ruskin.*

As men go towards culture, they go towards lowliness and humbleness of mind and heart. *Malcolm J. McLeod.*

To live near to God is the true way to live near to man. *Charles C. Hall.*

True humility consists in thinking ourselves inferior not so much to others as to our best selves. *Ivan Panim.*

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was "doing good;"
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude. *Whittier.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Psa. 51. 7.

Through love be servants one to another. Gal. 5. 13.

He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked. 1 John 2. 6.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 5. 3.

In lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself. Phil. 2. 3.

Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. 1 Pet. 5. 5, 6.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Jesus knew the hour had come, says John, when "He should depart out of this world unto the Father." In this beautiful way I will think of death, as a going home to my Father.

He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, said Jesus; the feet have been in contact with the dust of the road and must be cleansed. This act of Christ, Bernard of Clairvaux calls the sacrament for the daily sins. The cleansing that comes at the beginning of a Christian life will not last; there must be daily cleansing from the daily sins. As a watch will not keep running without being wound up daily, so I can not keep my Christian life in running order without receiving the strength and power that comes from daily communion with divine Strength.

"If you please, sir, are you anybody in particular?" timidly asked Theodore Hook of a college mate, who with an air of great importance was strutting along the campus in cap and gown. Am I anybody in particular that I should not stoop to serve? I will compare what I am with what I ought to be, and then I shall never be self-conceited or arrogant.

As an artist keeps bright colored stones or other objects near so as to keep his sense of color from weakening, so I must keep Christ's example ever before me that my ideal of right living may not become weakened. I will study His teachings, reflect upon His life, and strive to make His spirit my spirit.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Chapter 12 closes John's account of Jesus' public ministry. The next five chapters give his account of Jesus' last hours with His disciples. It is Thursday night of Passion Week. Jesus and His disciples are assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem to partake of the feast of the passover. A contention has arisen among the disciples as to which was accounted the greatest, and no

one will stoop to perform for the rest the lowly service of washing their feet as they recline at the table. Suddenly Jesus arises. He knows, John tells us, that the hour is at hand when He shall leave this world and return to His Father, who has given all things into His hands (Judas at the suggestion of Satan having fully determined to betray Him), and He loves His own even unto the end. Fully conscious of His union with the Father, Jesus yet rises and puts off His flowing outer garment which would impede His action, girds Himself with a towel, and pouring water into the basin, begins to perform the humble service of washing and wiping the disciples' feet. He comes to Peter. Astonished and dismayed, Peter impulsively exclaims, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" He is only a disciple, Jesus seems to remind him, and he does not understand what Jesus is doing; this knowledge will come later. "Thou shalt never wash my feet," thus Peter, humble yet self-willed, dictates to his Master. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." "No part with Thee! If washing is necessary to fellowship with Thee, then wash not my feet only, but my hands and my head," with quick change of feeling Peter replies. "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet," Jesus explains, still speaking figuratively and meaning that one who is morally clean still needs cleansing from special faults. "Ye are clean, but not all," He adds, referring to Judas. "Do you understand the meaning of my act?" Jesus questions as He resumes His place at the table. "I who am your Teacher and Lord, as you rightly say, have given you an example; in this same humble, loving, self-sacrificing spirit ought you to serve one another. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Our present ignorance of God's purpose in His dealings with us will be made plain hereafter.

2. Whether the world is growing better or worse is a question often disputed. And whether there is more or less vice and intemperance, lying and stealing, Sabbath-breaking and indifference to various religious ordinances, than there once was, may perhaps fairly be debated. But about one thing there can be no possible dispute, the age in which we live is witnessing a more widespread emphasis both within and without Christian circles upon Jesus' great principle of the brotherhood of man, and a more complete realization of it in active, helpful service than any age before. *A. C. McGiffert.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the entire farewell discourse and intercessory prayer of Jesus, John 14. 1–17. 26. 2. Find in the 14th chapter seven reasons given why the disciples should not be troubled. 3. Commit to memory the first three verses. 4. In John 2. 16 what did Jesus mean by "My Father's house?" In the first verse of the next lesson what does He mean by the expression? 5. What had Jesus taught the disciples in chapters 6 and 10 about the Way? 6. What descriptive adjective is often applied to Thomas? On what other occasion did he express a doubt? (20. 24.) 7. What have we heard about Philip before this? (John 1. 43–46; 6. 7; 12. 21.) 8. Do verses 13 and 14 mean that all prayer will be answered? Is there any limitation to the kind of prayer it is right to offer?

LESSON V — MAY 3

OUR HEAVENLY HOME

John 14. 1–14. (Read John 14.) Commit vv. 2, 3.

Golden Text

In my Father's house are many mansions. John 14. 2.

LESSON TEXT John 14. 1–14 TIME Thursday evening, April 6, A. D. 30

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.
4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.
5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?
6 Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.
8 Philip said unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.
9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then,* Shew us the Father?
10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.
11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.
12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and the greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.
13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it.*

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Troubled.* The knowledge that there was a traitor among them, the humbling lesson they had received, and the repeated announcement that Jesus was soon to leave them, had greatly agitated the disciples. *Ye believe.* R. V., *believe.* Trust.

2. *My Father's house.* Heaven. *Mansions.* R. V. margin, *abiding places.* Our word *mansion* meant at first merely a place of shelter. *I go.* R. V., *for I go.* This is the purpose of His atoning death. See Heb. 6. 20.

3. *I will come again and receive you.* R. V., *I come again and will receive you. If I go . . . I come again.* As there is no uncertainty about His going, so there is none about His coming. See verses 18 and 28. "*I come*

again refers not so much to His coming at the end of the world, or in great crises of history, or at the death of believers, as to the progressive influence of the Holy Spirit in His church, preparing the way for the final and completed union of Christ and His people (after the resurrection at the last day), (6. 40) which is predicted in the succeeding part of the verse." *New Century Bible. There ye may be also.* See John 17. 24.

4. R. V., *And whither I go, ye know the way.* See verse 6. Compare the instruction given in our lessons for March 1 and April 5.

5. *Thomas saith.* Compare 11. 16; 20. 24. *And how can we know the way.* R. V., *how know we the way.*

6. *I am the way.* The way to the Father as the goal. Compare John 10. 9; Rom. 5. 2; Heb. 10. 20; Eph. 2. 18. *The truth.* The true Revealer of the Father. *The life.* The source of the life that can not die. (John 1. 4; 6. 51; 10. 10; 11. 25, 26; 1 John 5. 12, 20.) *No man.* R. V., *no one.*

7. *If ye had known me.* In the Greek there are two verbs, as there are in modern French and German, one of which means to know directly and the other to know of. It is the former verb used here, and the sentence means that if they had recognized Jesus, had realized His divinity, they would have known that He and His Father were one, and would therefore have known the Father. *Should.* R. V., *would. And from.* R. V., *from.*

8. *Show us the Father.* Jesus had told them that He Himself revealed the Father's character; Philip would see the Father's glory.

9. *And yet hast thou not known me.* R. V., *and dost thou not know me.* Compare his first opinion of Jesus, John 1. 45. His request seems to show that his knowledge of Jesus as the Revealer of the Father had not increased as it should after being so long with Him. *And how sayest thou then.* R. V., *How sayest thou.*

10. *I am . . . in me.* John 10. 38. *The words . . . myself.* R. V., *the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself. But . . . the works.* R. V., *But the Father abiding in me doeth his works.*

11. *Believe me . . . or else.* Believe that I and the Father are one because of My statement alone, but if you can not do this, because of the evidence of My works.

12. Jesus returns to His Father and His work which has been local becomes universal. "That which was done by St. Peter at Pentecost," says Godet, "by St. Paul all over the world, that which is affected by an ordinary preacher, a single believer, by bringing the Spirit into the heart, could not be done by Jesus during His sojourn in this world." *My father.* R. V., *the Father.*

14. *I will do it.* R. V., *That will I do.* An emphatic repetition of verse 13.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. I go to prepare a place for you. He prepared a place for us by the way He took to prepare a place. It was a very wonderful way.

In a lonely valley in Switzerland a small band of patriots once marched against an invading force of ten times their strength. They found themselves one day at the head of a narrow pass, confronted by a solid wall of spears. They made assault after assault, but that bristling line remained unbroken. Time after time they were driven back decimated with hopeless slaughter. The forlorn hope rallied for the last time. As they charged, their leader suddenly

advanced before them with outstretched arms, and every spear for three or four yards of the line was buried in his body. He fell dead. But he prepared a place for his followers. Through the open breach, over his dead body, they rushed to victory and won the freedom of their country.

So the Lord Jesus went before His people, the Captain of our salvation, sheathing the weapons of death and judgment in Himself and preparing a place for us with His dead body. Well for us is it, not only that He went away, but that He went by way of the Cross. *Henry Drummond, The Ideal Life.*

8. *Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.* Philip was right in thinking that our best evidence of immortality comes from the vision of the Father. I can not understand how any man who has a firm conviction of the fatherhood of God can be skeptical about the immortality of the soul. . . . The highest evidence of immortality is the vision of a God who has a relation to the human soul. The very incompleteness of that soul then becomes an argument in its favor. For, in the light of divine fatherhood, we say, "God will not leave His structure unfinished; He must have determined to finish it elsewhere! Tennyson cries, 'Thou art just; Thou wilt not leave me in the dust.' If God be our Father, His mercy and justice are one." The yearning of the human soul becomes itself a claim. The aspiration of the human heart becomes itself a right; the cry of the human heart becomes itself a call for the fulfillment of a promise. *George Matheson, Representative Men of the New Testament.*

9. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* If we would know God, we must study, not nature, not history, not our own hearts, but Jesus Christ. The Christlikeness of God — it is the one great truth about God for which the Christian revelation stands. . . . It is not simply that we are to refrain from attributing to God a character out of line with that revealed by Jesus, but that all we know about God we find in Jesus, who was the complete Revelation of God to the world, and "in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The character and purposes of Jesus of Nazareth are the character and purposes of God. *A. C. McGiffert.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Many mansions.* The image is derived from those vast oriental palaces, in which there is an abode not only for the sovereign and the heir to the throne, but also for all the sons of the kings, however numerous they may be. *Godet.*

2. *I go to prepare a place for you.* This figure is derived from the custom of sending forward one of a party to secure quarters and provide all requisites. *Marcus Dods.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Jesus and His disciples are still in the upper room in Jerusalem where the Last Supper was held. Plainly now Jesus told them that one of them would betray Him. Amazed, the disciples bade John ask Jesus whom He meant. Jesus gave John to understand by handing a morsel of food to Judas. "What thou doest, do quickly," He commanded the traitor. The others did not know to

what He referred, but Judas understood and went out into the dark night to carry out his dark deed.

Jesus then told the others that He should be with them but a little while, and He gave them a new commandment, that they love one another even as He loved them. Such love on their part would prove them to be His disciples. Peter asked where He was going, and why he could not follow, saying that he would lay down his life for Him. "Would you?" solemnly Jesus questioned; "The cock shall not crow until you have thrice denied Me."

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A physician in an English town was once called to the door of a Gipsy cart. He gave one look at the little patient there and exclaimed, "Small pox! Get out of town at once." It was the family of the noted evangelist who is known as "Gipsy Smith." They drove beyond the town limits and encamped. The father cared for the child, and the mother cooked for them. Another child was taken with the dread disease, and then the mother. From the first there was no hope for the mother. Realizing this, the father who once in prison had heard a sermon, and had then learned there is a God, asked her if she knew about Him. "Yes," she said, "but there is no mercy for me." In utter despair the man bowed his head, and then heard his wife sing happily:

"I have a Father in the promised land,
My Father calls me, I must go
To meet Him in the promised land."

"Where did you learn that?" he exclaimed. "When a child," she answered. "Once my father's tent was pitched on Sunday where the village children passed it on their way to Sunday-school. I followed them, and heard this song, but I had forgotten it till now." In her great need the song came back to her, and the thought that it was her Father she was going to meet brought her peace and comfort. She was no longer afraid to die.

Jesus, realizing that His Father was calling Him and He must go to meet Him, spent the last hours that He had with His disciples the night before His death in speaking words of comfort and encouragement, and in telling them that in His Father's house above there was room for them, too.

For Older Pupils. The eleven are still in that upper room with their loved Leader. He has spoken to them about His departure from them, and they are greatly troubled. Before Him looms the shadow of the cross and of that awful agony we may not understand, and yet He who so sorely needs comfort Himself, is thinking only of comforting His faithful disciples, uttering those beautiful words that have been the comfort and hope of Christians from that day to this. "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." And then He speaks to them about Heaven.

When Rev. G. Campbell Morgan was returning from America to England with a friend, he tells us, they watched a glorious sunset together, and his friend broke the long silence by saying: "What a blessed thing it is that before we go hence God will enlarge our capacity. If there is anything much more beautiful in Heaven than that, I do not think I could bear it. How beautiful God must be when He paints a picture like that just to gladden us, and presently He will blot it out as though it didn't matter." Does not this friend's thought

explain, perhaps, why we are told so little about Heaven? Our capacity must first be enlarged before we can appreciate it. The few words which Christ spoke about our future Home, though they fall short of what we naturally long to know, are yet full of comforting assurance.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I In My Father's House are Many Mansions

Why we know so Little about Heaven. We have no absolute knowledge of Heaven. Why does not the Bible tell us more? Why did not Christ describe it for us? He came from God and He returned to God; Heaven is where God and Christ are; there are abiding places there for all who know the way through Him: this He has told us, but He has not satisfied our natural longing to know what are the conditions and occupations and rewards of Heaven. One reason for this silence on His part must be that our finite minds are wholly incapable of understanding infinite, eternal verities. Another reason is shown in His teachings. Eternal life begins here and now. Responsibility for the present rests with us, and to this He directs our thoughts again and again, but He is silent about the delights and rewards awaiting us in the hereafter, for these may not concern us now.

We are told just Enough. Had we been told more it would have interfered seriously with the aim, the method and the spirit of our present life. We are told just this and no more: We shall be forever with the Lord; we shall see Him as He is; we shall be made like unto Him. The few things besides these which we are told are really incidental, and are involved in these primary and vital things. We shall be forever with the Lord; we shall see Him as He is; we shall be made like unto Him — do you not see how perfectly, how beautifully, these things accord with the conditions, the needs, the aims, and the aspirations of the present Christian life? Our life here is with Christ; we see Him more and more, though only as in a glass darkly; and we are becoming more and more like Him. So there is not only a beautiful harmony in the life of the whole family on earth and in Heaven, but there is unity in the life that now is and that which is to come. So Heaven begins here, and what comes after death will be only the continuation and the consummation of the earthly life. Nothing here and nothing hereafter must detract from the glorious preëminence of Him in whom and by whom we live. Heaven begins here and goes on forever without any serious interruption. *Thomas S. Hastings, Union Seminary Addresses.*

How we build our Heavenly Mansions. I want to tell my children this morning the story of a dream which I have read. A lady who was very rich dreamed that God called her up to Heaven and that she was going through the streets of the glorious city, a guide with her to show her the way. She noticed a very fine mansion being built.

She said to her guide: "Whose is that?" I think she must have felt that she would like it for her own. And she was very much surprised when the guide answered, "That is for your gardener." "For my gardener?" she said; "Why, he never lived in a mansion on earth; he lived in a little bit of a house. He might have had a finer home if he hadn't given away so much."

The guide said nothing in reply, and they went on. Soon they came to a

plain-looking house. There was nothing mean about it, for there is nothing mean in Heaven. But it was no mansion as the other; not nearly so beautiful and attractive. The lady said, "Whose is this?" And the guide answered, "That is for you." "For me?" she said. "Why I always lived in an elegant mansion on earth." "Yes, I know," the guide said, and he said it sadly, "but the Great King of Heaven is doing the best He can with the material that was sent up." *Frank T. Bayley, Little Ten-Minutes.*

II Jesus the Way, the Truth, and the Life

I am the Way. The highest reason is at once stimulated and satisfied when the divine Teacher likens Himself unto the sun, the vine, the life, the truth. But since no object is more homely than the road over which pass the weary multitudes, with herds and flocks and caravans, it stirs our sense of wonder that Christ should have likened Himself unto the way that leads into some imperial city. Yet the events of that far-off Roman era lent to the road a world-wide significance, and made "the way" one of the richest of Christ's symbols. At best it was a rude, wild age. Society was chaotic and unorganized. For reasons of safety men dwelt in walled towns and cities. There were brigands in the mountains and wolves in the hills. When the night fell the keepers hurried their flocks toward the gates of the villages, and the caravans made haste to find safety within the walls of some town. In such an age Julius Cæsar conceived the idea of binding all the provinces together by a system of roads. And with these ways and roads uniting the towns and cities, levelling the valleys and making the mountains low, peace followed tumult and danger gave way to security. Soon the road came to stand for security, peace and permanency. By reasons of the associations with law, government, justice, it may be doubted whether any other term could have carried more meaning to men than the expression, "I am the Way." *Newell Dwight Hillis.*

Dwell ye within cot or hall,
Be ye lord or be ye thrall,
Have ye joy or grief for store,
Know ye this — from every door,
Straight across the sky's blue meads,
Up to Heaven a pathway leads! *Clinton Scollard.*

I am the Truth. Jesus does not say, observe, I speak the truth. There was a deeper meaning in His mind than that. I hope that every child will speak the truth, yet every child, as his experience grows, will discover with shame how untrue he is at heart. Christ is the sun and center of all truth. Where Christ is not, there is a false note always. And one of the great joys of knowing Jesus is the sweet assurance that Truth is ours at last. Before the discovery of the law of gravitation, there were a thousand facts that no man could explain. There was no key to them. There was no plan in them. They could never be gathered into a worthy system. But when the great truth of gravitation was discovered — so simple, so universal, so sublime — a flood of light fell on the darkness, and disorder became order everywhere. And it is just so when we discover Jesus. That truth sheds light upon a thousand facts. Things that were quite inexplicable once — sorrows and joys and hopes and fears and hauntings — become intelligible through this great discovery. Did not some one say that if you would find the truth you must seek for it at the

bottom of a deep well? The glory of the truth that is in Jesus is, that it is found in no dark well, but on the way. *Quid est veritas?* asked jesting Pilate. And in one of the best anagrams the world has ever had, the answer is given, *Est vir qui adest. F. B. Meyer.*

Thou who art Light, shine on each soul!
Thou who art Truth, each mind control!
Open our eyes and let us see
The path which leads to Heaven and Thee. *John Hay.*

I am the Life. Do you know what life is? No; neither does anybody. Life is indefinable; life is God. Life is measured by the number of things you are alive to. The fulness of our life means what we are about to do. I must have a life that is more abundant than my own poor nature. I must take the power of Jesus and have inside fellowship with Him. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living: I am the Way which thou shouldest pursue; the Truth which thou shouldest believe; the Life which thou shouldest hope for. *Thomas à Kempis.*

III The Promises of Answer to Prayer

The Limitations to the Promise. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name that will I do. *Whatsoever,* the promise seems at first thought limitless, as if Christ promised His disciples that after His return to the Father He would use His influence with Him in their behalf, to grant any request whatever that they might make in prayer. But as we read these words carefully, we see that there are two limitations; the request shall be in Christ's name, and shall be to the glory of the Father and the Son. To ask in the name of Christ is not merely to repeat the words, "For Christ's sake we ask it," or "Through Jesus Christ our Lord;" it is to use His name as a plea, to ask that the request be granted because of His merits rather than our own, and we can rightly claim this privilege only when our requests are in harmony with the spirit and interests of Christ. Christ would not lend His name to any petition that if granted would not be for the glory of the Father, He would offer no petition that was not in accordance with the Father's will.

John rightly understood his Master's words. In his first Epistle he says; "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as He gave us commandment." And again: "And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him." James understood Christ's words rightly, for He says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss."

What, then, is asking amiss? What sort of petitions are barred by the qualifications of the promise of Christ? Petitions, certainly, of those who are not true followers of Christ, for they are not in harmony with His Spirit. Petitions for help in carrying out evil designs, for such Christ would never

sanction. Petitions that are not in accordance with the will of God, for Christ Himself said, in Gethsemane, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done."

Prayer is not a Substitute for our Own Efforts. "God has made no promise to answer insincere prayer; and that prayer is insincere which is not followed up by hearty efforts to secure the thing sought." We smile at the story of the little girl who fell and made no effort to arise, because, as she said, she had asked God to pick her up, "but He wasn't doing it very quick," and yet we ourselves sometimes ask God to do for us what we should do for ourselves. Those who ask God to cure them from some disease, and refuse a physician's help, think they are very sincere in their petitions, and yet medicine and a physician's skill are means which God has given us to help combat disease, and those who refuse them are demanding that God cure them in their own way rather than in His, if it is His will to cure them at all.

Just as true is this principle in regard to the answering of our prayers for spiritual benefits. We pray God to make us good, and we think we are sincere in our desire to be good, and then we disobey His commands and we are not good, God has not answered our prayer and by a miracle made us good all at once. "All that God can do is to help us to make ourselves good," says Rev. Samuel C. Bushnell. "He can not bestow goodness upon us, for that depends on our own hearts and minds and wills. We have to acquire it for ourselves, by His grace, indeed, without which we should utterly fail, for no man is sufficient unto himself, but also by the exercise of our own strenuous and unremitting efforts."

"Prayer must mean something to us, if it is to mean anything to God," as Dr. Babcock rightly says. Prayer for goodness often means little to us; we think we wish to be good, but do we resolve with God's help to do away with our selfishness, to overcome our vindictiveness, to put away forever our tendency to deceit? Sincere prayer for strength to resist temptation, for help in combating the sins to which we are liable, is always heard and answered, for such prayer is offered according to God's will.

SENTENCE SERMONS

He that is afraid of solemn things has probably solemn reason to be afraid of them. *Spurgeon.*

Life fellowship with Jesus is the only school for the science of heavenly things. *Andrew Murray.*

There is growth and progress in walking with God. *Lester Bradford.*

If we would have God hear what we say to Him by prayer, we must be ready to hear what He says to us by His word. *Matthew Henry.*

Earth holds Heaven in the bud; our perfection there is to be developed out of our imperfection here. *Christina Rossetti.*

Earth is our little island home,
And Heaven the neighboring continent.
Whence winds to every inlet come
With balmiest scent. *Lucy Larcom.*

I wonder many times that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what God is preparing for him. *Rutherford.*

Heaven's door has no bolt or bar on that side; we put them up on this.—*Pearse.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come. Heb. 13. 14.

For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. 2 Cor. 5. 1.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Isa. 26. 3.

I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. John 10. 9.

For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life. John 6. 40.

He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son hath not the life. 1 John 5. 12.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

All Jews had a nominal belief in God, but their belief did not lead all to trust in His goodness and care in such a time of danger and sorrow as now beset the disciples. Is my belief nominal or real? Can I say that I will not let my heart be troubled, for I believe in God and in His Son Jesus Christ? "Happy and strong and brave shall I be,— able to endure all things, and to do all things, — if I believe that every day, every hour, every moment of my life is in His hands."

Heaven is where God is. But we can be with God here and now. "Many think of being happy with God in Heaven, but the being happy with God on earth never enters into their thoughts," said John Wesley. It is our duty and our privilege to live with God in the present.

Christ has gone to prepare a place for all of us, but whether each one shall inherit that place depends on himself alone. Shall I one day hear Him say to me, "Come up higher; where I am you shall be also?"

It is better to be a Thomas who expresses his doubt so that he may receive instruction — than to be a disciple who doubts and keeps silent.

Philip had been with Jesus from the beginning of His public ministry, and yet he shows by his question that he had not understood His words and did not know that His life had been one continuous revelation of the Father. Is it possible that I am hearing His words to so little purpose? Could He say to me as to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me?"

I will make known to God in prayer all my wants, even for temporal blessings, and I will trust Him to grant or withhold according to His will, and especially will I ask Him for strength to overcome my faults and for guidance in my daily life.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Silent in their astonishment, perplexity, and sorrow, the eleven loyal disciples sit looking at their Master in that upper room in Jerusalem late on Thursday evening of Passion Week. He has told them that one of them shall betray Him, that one of them shall deny Him, that He is going where they can not follow Him. Then He comforts them in this crisis, telling them that Heaven

is sure and they shall be reunited at last never to part, that He is the Way to Heaven, and that His work will continue in greater fruitfulness after His departure.

"Let not your heart be troubled," He counsels them; they ought to trust in God and in Him; by going He will make ready for them a place in Heaven, His Father's house (if this were not so He would have told them that their hopes might not be in vain), they shall be with Him there: the way they know, for He had told them. Thomas interrupts His Master, "We do not even know where You are going, how can we know the way?" "I am going to the Father," Jesus patiently replies to His dull pupil; "and I am the Way, only through your relation to Me as the Way, the Truth, and the Life can you come where I am going. If you had really known Me, you would have known that I and the Father are One." Philip now interrupts the Lord, he wants sight, not faith, and he asks to be shown the Father. Surprised and pained, Jesus replies, "Can it be that I have been so long with you, and yet you do not really know Me, do not know that in Me you have seen the Father, that My words and works are the Father's? Believe that I and the Father are one because of My words alone, but if you can not do this, believe because of My life and works which prove this." Then turning to all the disciples He continues His words of comfort to them. Because He leaves them they and all true followers in whom He dwells shall continue His work with yet greater results. (And is it not grandly true that He whose field was the little land of Palestine now has the entire world for His province, and the little handful of faithful followers has increased to a multitude that no man can number?) Whatever they ask in His name shall be granted; only such a request can rightly be made in the name of the Son that is made with the provision, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." If they love Him, they will keep His commandments. He will not leave them desolate; they shall have the help of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who will teach them. Then He gives them His parting legacy: "Peace I leave with you: My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful."

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

In adding that if hopes for the future life were baseless, He would have told them, Jesus seems to guarantee the deep instincts of human nature as correct interpreters of God's mind toward man, as well as to confirm any hope which His own words may raise. *George Reith.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read John 15. 26–16. 24. 2. To what does "These things," verse 4, refer? 3. What help would it be to the disciples when trouble came to remember that Jesus had foretold its coming? 4. Had not the question of verse 5 been asked? (John 13. 36; 14. 5.) 5. What, then, is Jesus' meaning here? 6. What does *expedient* mean? 7. What does Jesus say will be the work of the Comforter? 8. By whom is the Comforter given? (Luke 4. 18; John 14.16, 26; 15. 26; 16. 7.) 9. What is said about the Holy Spirit as a Teacher in John 14.26; 16. 13, 14; 1 Cor. 2. 10, 13?

LESSON VI — MAY 10

THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 16. 4–15. (Read John 15. 26–16, 24.) Commit v. 13.

Golden Text

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. John 14. 16.

LESSON TEXT John 16. 4–15 TIME Thursday evening, April 6, A. D. 30

4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

4. *These things.* His words of encouragement and warning. See 13. 19; 14. 29; 16. 1. *Told you.* R. V., *spoken unto you. The time shall come.* R. V., *their hour is come. Ye may remember that I told you of them.* R. V., *ye may remember them, how that I told you. At the beginning.* R. V., *from the beginning.* Compare Matt. 10. 16–39. While Jesus had spoken before of the persecutions that awaited them, He now gave them a fuller, more definite forewarning of the world's hatred of them as His representatives, together with the promise of the Spirit's presence with them.

5. *I go my way.* R. V., *I go. And none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?* Peter had asked this question (13. 36) and Thomas had implied it (14. 5), but they had thought then only of a separation and had failed to realize what His words actually meant. How their hearts are filled with grief (verse

6) as the truth is made clear to them, and He would rouse them out of themselves and their despair to thoughts of Himself.

6. *Said.* R. V., *spoken.*

7. *Expedient for you.* For your advantage.

8. *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin.* R. V., *And he, when he is come, shall convict the world in respect of sin.* "The Spirit will bring home to men's consciences a right conviction respecting sin, righteousness, and judgment." *Farrar.*

9. Unbelief in Christ is sin. Compare 15. 22, 24.

10. *Of righteousness.* "The Spirit will make use of the exaltation of Christ to make men think earnestly on the whole subject of righteousness; to show them the utterly rotten character of their own righteousness, whose crowning feat was to crucify Jesus; to bring home to their hearts the solemn truth that the Crucified One was the Just One; and ultimately to put them on a track for finding in Jesus their true righteousness, by raising in their minds the question, Why, then, did the Just One suffer?" *Bruce. My Father.* R. V., *the Father.*

11. *The prince of this world.* Satan. *Is judged.* R. V., *hath been judged.* "The victory of faith achieved by Christ and to be shared with His followers would prove to be the overthrow of Satan's kingdom (compare 12. 31; 14. 30), and the setting up of a kingdom which was not of this world." *New-Century Bible.* "In spite of the apparent failure of Christ and triumph of the Evil One, Satan had, even by Christ's death, been finally judged." *Farrar.*

12. Compare 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2.

13. *He will guide you into all truth.* R. V., *He shall guide you into all the truth.* "By guiding in the 'way' that leads to the truth." (14. 6). *McClymont.* "It is the Church at large He finally leads into all truth through centuries of error." *Dods. He shall not speak from himself.* R. V., *of himself.* Jesus had said the same thing of His own words. Compare 5. 19, 30; 7. 16–18; 8. 26, 28; 14. 10. "The Father is the source of the Son's words, Father and Son, of the Spirit's. The work of the Spirit is the unfolding of the significance of the work of the Son; the work of the Son was the manifesting the name of the Father." *Reith. But whatsoever . . . come.* R. V., *but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.* "Such as the rise of heresies and apostasies, the coming of Antichrist, the conflict between light and darkness, and their final issue as described in the Book of Revelation." *Bruce.*

14. *He shall glorify me.* "The fulfillment of this promise is found in every action and word of the apostles. Under the Spirit's guidance they lived wholly for Christ; the dispensation of the Spirit was the Christian dispensation." *Dods. Receive. . . . shew.* R. V., *take. . . . declare.*

15. Compare John 13. 3; 17. 10; 1 Cor. 15. 28.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

4. *These things I said not unto you from the beginning.* On former occasions, especially on the occasion of the trial mission of the twelve, Jesus had said much the same things; He had spoken of scourging in synagogues at least, if not of excommunication from them, and alluded to death by violence as at least a possible fate for the Apostles of the kingdom. But He had said all things in a different way. There He *preached* concerning perse-

cution; here He makes an awfully real *announcement.* There is all the difference between that discourse and the present communication that there would be between a sermon on the text, "It is appointed unto men once to die," and a special intimation to an individual, "This year thou shalt die." The sermon may say far more about death than the intimation, but in how different a manner, and with what a different effect! *A. B. Bruce, Training of the Twelve.*

7. *It is expedient for you that I go away.* So long as eyes could see, and ears hear, and hands handle the Word of Life, Christ abode for the most part unseen, unheard, untouched; but when a cloud received Him out of sight, then it became possible for all mankind at all times and in all places to behold Him with the eye of faith, listen to Him with the ear of hope, hold Him fast and not let Him go with the hands of adoring love. *Christina Rossetti.*

11. *Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.* "The prince of this world cometh," said Christ as He looked forward to Calvary. We, too, will look that way to see Him. We see wickedness working its will unhindered. Did not sin in Caiaphas, in the rulers, in Pilate, in the soldiers, in the multitude, uncoil itself as if by an irresistible compulsion, and at last exhibit its whole terrible length? The prince of this world was unseen; but does conscience need much proof that he was there? On the cross was spotless innocence, around it raged a pitiless enmity; on the cross was measureless love, around it surged a sea of fiendish hate. If Satan had been visible, he could have added nothing to that exhibition of sin. We say sin was exposed on that day,—"Judged," said Christ; "the prince of this world has been judged:" not punished, but exposed and condemned, judged as the prisoner in court is judged when he is proved guilty and sentenced as a criminal, even before the hand of law takes him from the bar. Conscience, though clouded by sin, sees this towering manifestation of sin, and condemns it in haste; and conscience enlightened, we know not how much, by the Spirit of God, tells us that its own judgment is but the diminished echo of the sentence on high. *Thomas E. Bartlett,* in *History, Prophecy, and Gospel.*

13. *He will guide you into all truth.*

He to His own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them, and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write
To guide them in all truth. *Milton.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"Arise, let us go hence," said Jesus, but probably (see 18. 1) they arose but lingered in the upper room in Jerusalem while He continued to comfort and admonish them. By His beautiful illustration of the vine and its branches He taught them their need of continuing in spiritual union with Him, that through Him they might receive strength and bear much fruit. As He had kept His Father's commandments, and His Father loved Him, so they must keep His commandments and He will continue to love them. They must love one another, even as He loved them. Greater love can not be shown than in the laying down of life for one's friends. He had chosen them to be His friends, He had made known to them His Father's words, and they ought to be fruitful in deeds. He warns them that they shall suffer hatred and persecution, but

they must remember that they are only sharing in His sufferings because of their fellowship with Him.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. An English writer says that as he was passing through the streets of a great city he saw a bill posted up outside a military station. More recruits were needed, and the bill gave a list of the advantages of a soldier's life — good and ample food, clothing, and shelter, good pay, free services of physician and nurse in case of illness; but nothing was said about the hard drill, discomforts, and exposure to danger and to death. "Contrast this with the action of Jesus!" suggests the writer. Jesus never allowed any one to enlist in His army without knowing what its hardships and dangers were; He never presented only the bright side and passed over the other in silence. Now in His last talk with His disciples He warns them of what the future has in store for them. He tells them they shall be put out of the synagogue, and the time will even come when people who do not know the Father will put them to death and imagine that by so doing they are serving God. Why did He say that He told them these things? (Verse 4.) What effect did His telling have upon them? (Verse 6.)

For Older Pupils. Have you ever known that some calamity was impending and yet has it come at last with the suddenness of the unexpected? Have you ever known what it means to see a loved one grow weaker and weaker, to be told again and again that he was going to leave you, and yet hope against hope till when the parting comes you are as stunned by the blow as if you had never feared its coming? Then you can understand the condition of the disciples as they journeyed across the brook Kidron to the Garden of Gethsemane. Again and again Christ had told them that He must die, had referred to His "hour" as not far off, and had warned them of persecutions that awaited them; all these things they had heard but had not realized. Now the hour is at hand, and they seem utterly stunned.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Expediency of Christ's Departure

Not only Expedient, but Indispensable. Till Jesus had died, risen, ascended, the essentials about Him would remain incomplete; the materials for a Gospel would not be ready to hand. There could be neither apostolic preaching, nor the demonstration of the Spirit with power accompanying it. It must be possible for the Apostles and the Spirit to bear witness of One who, though perfectly holy, had been crucified, to show the world the heinousness of its sin. They must have it in their power to declare that God hath made that same Jesus whom they have crucified both Lord and Christ, exalted to heavenly glory, before their hearers can be pricked in the heart, and made to exclaim in terror, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Only after Jesus had ascended to glory, and become invisible to mortal eyes, could men be made to understand that He was not only personally a righteous man, but the Lord their righteousness. Then the question would force itself upon their minds: What could be the meaning of the Lord of Glory becoming man and

dying on the cross? And by the teaching of the Spirit they would learn to reply, not as in the days of their ignorance, "He suffers for His own offences," but, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions."

All this the disciples for the present did not understand. Of the Spirit's work on the conscience of the world and in their own minds and of the relation in which the Third Person of the Trinity stood to the Second, they had simply no conception. But the time came when the disciples understood these matters, and then they freely appreciated the eulogium of their Lord on the dispensation of the Comforter. Then they acknowledged that the assertion was indeed true that it was expedient for them that He should go away, and smiled when they remembered that they had once thought otherwise; yea, they perceived that the word "expedient," far from being too strong, was rather a weak expression, chosen in gracious accommodation to their feeble spiritual capacity, instead of the stronger one, "indispensable." Then they felt as we imagine good men feel when they get to Heaven. To those on the other side how insignificant a matter must death seem, and how strange must it appear to their purged vision, that it should ever have been needful to prove to them that it was better to depart to Heaven than to remain in a world of sin and sorrow! *A. B. Bruce, Training of the Twelve.*

The Result. These words occur in Christ's last conference, just before His crucifixion. That conference was occupied by Him, not in receiving comfort and strength from His friends, but in ministering comfort and strength to them. He began by simply saying to them, "You have faith in God; have faith also in Me." He led them up by successive stages into the mystery of divine consolation and strength, and finally reached its consummation in these words: "It is for your advantage that I am going away." I do not think they could have believed Him,—that it could be a gain to them that He should depart from them; this was paradoxical, inexplicable, impossible . . . and yet, looking back through the centuries, we see that it is true,—we see that Christianity gained by the death of Christ; the cause gained, and the individual disciples gained. We see Peter a coward while Christ was living; when Christ was with him, brave; when Christ left him, denying his Master with oaths and cursing; the moment that Christ looked upon him, turning back again, and weeping over his disgrace. We see this same Peter, a few weeks after Christ's death, standing before the Sanhedrin and saying: "It matters not what you say; we serve God and not man." We see Paul taking the Gospel of Christ, which while the Master lived had not been preached outside of Palestine, and had made few converts even there—we see Paul carrying this Gospel throughout Asia Minor, across the Hellespont into Europe, upon a world crusade. Not the manger is the cradle of Christianity, but the cross. *Lyman Abbott, Signs of Promise.*

The World never knows its Great Men while they live. The great truths are never apprehended while the great teachers of those truths are living to expound them. The death of a great teacher deepens and disseminates the knowledge of the truth. It was so with the death of Christ. It has been so with the death of every great teacher since Christ died. For the truth is always greater than the individual expounder of it—deeper, higher, broader, larger. The Reformation is a great deal broader than Luther; and Calvanism is a great deal larger than John Calvin; Methodism is im-

measurably more than Wesley; and in a true sense, Christianity is more than Jesus of Nazareth — not more than Christ, but more than Jesus of Nazareth. There are some persons that look forward with hope to a second coming, in fleshly and visible presence, of Christ. They want to see Jesus of Nazareth descend again to earth, enthroned and crowned, sitting at Jerusalem. This would limit Christianity instead of broadening it, weaken instead of strengthening it, decrease instead of adding to its power. While Christ lived in Palestine, Christianity could not run beyond the bounds of His individual influence — the words He uttered, the presence He carried. It was not until He died that the truth and the life which He inspired could have free course and go everywhither.

Spiritual Christianity runs beyond the bounds of historical Christianity. No great truth can be fully made manifest in a single narrow life; and every individual life is narrow. As long as the great leader lives the truth is caged; when the cage is destroyed the bird has liberty to fly out to carry its song everywhither. *Lyman Abbott, Signs of Promise.*

II The Holy Spirit

The Meaning of the Word translated Comforter. The word Παράκλητος, paracletos, Paraclete, is translated *Comforter* here, and *Advocate* in 1 John 2. 1. The margin of the Revised Version gives both *Advocate* and *Helper.* The Greek verb really expresses all three ideas. The first meaning of παρακαλέω, the verb from which the Greek noun is derived, is *to call to aid;* the noun, then, stands for one who is called to another's aid, whether to comfort, to plead his cause, or to help in some other way. At the time Jesus promised the aid of the Holy Spirit His despairing disciples needed a comforter, and this translation, Comforter, is especially fitting here, but perhaps we shall have a better idea of the Spirit's power and office if we think of Him as our Helper.

The Trinity. There are in the sanctuaries of the old churches of the East on Mount Athos sacred pictures intended to represent the doctrine of the Trinity, in which, as the spectator stands at one side, he sees only the figure of our Saviour on the Cross, as he stands on the other side he sees only the Heavenly Dove, as he stands in the front he sees only the Ancient of Days, the Eternal Father. So it is with the representations of this truth in the Bible, and, we may add, in the experiences of religious life. *Dean Stanley, Christian Institutions.*

An undivided Nature shared
With Father and with Son;
A Person by Thyself; with Them
Thy simple essence One.

Thou art an unborn Breath outbreathed
On angels and on men,
Subduing all things to Thyself,
We know not how or when. *F. W. Faber.*

Christ's Teaching about the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament writers have shown us God as one who is outside and above this world, our Creator, our Preserver, and our Ruler. The Gospels have shown us God as our Father, and in Christ Himself we have seen God as the Son, our Brother and Saviour.

In the Holy Spirit Christ shows us not God afar off, but the "Immanent God," God dwelling in us, an ever-present God and Helper.

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit
With spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer
Than hands and feet,"

declares Browning.

Christ declares that the Holy Spirit shall convict us of sin—"And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" He shall teach us—"The Holy Spirit shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you;" and He shall guide us—"When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth."

Perhaps you have watched an experiment by which the agency of the air in producing sound is proved. Inside a glass globe a silver bell is suspended by a spiral spring and set in motion, and the ringing of the bell is clearly heard. Then by means of an air-pump attached to the globe, the air is gradually withdrawn; the sound of the bell's ringing grows fainter and fainter; at last the air is exhausted, and though you can see the tongue of the bell striking against its sides, you can hear no sound whatever. Just as the air is necessary within the globe to produce the phenomenon of sound, so the presence of the Spirit of God within our hearts is necessary to convict us of sin, to teach and guide us.

Christ declares, too, that the Holy Spirit shall bear witness of Him, shall magnify Him, and carry on His work—"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, which procedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me; he shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you." Magnificently did the Holy Spirit in Livingstone prove all this to Stanley.

When Stanley went to Africa in search of Livingstone he was not a Christian, but after he had met and lived with Livingstone, he bore this testimony:—"Here is a man who is manifestly sustained as well as guided from Heaven. The Holy Spirit dwells in him. God speaks through him. The heroism, the nobility, the pure and stainless enthusiasm at the root of his life come, beyond question, from Christ. There must, therefore, be a Christ; and it is worth while to have such a Helper and Redeemer as this Christ undoubtedly is, and as He here reveals Himself in this wonderful disciple."

III Filled with the Spirit

The Great Gift. In the third chapter of Ephesians Paul speaks of the privilege of being filled with the Spirit. "I bow my knees unto the Father that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

And then later in the same Epistle Paul uses the present imperative and bids the Ephesians "be filled with the spirit." God does not give the gift of His

Spirit to a few alone, He gives it to all, and it is not only our privilege but our duty to accept His gift.

Why All are not filled with the Spirit. A furnace may be full of coal, and a fire started, but if the smoke-stack is partly filled with soot or a brick has fallen down the chimney and partly obstructs the flue, the fire will burn but poorly and little heat and much coal gas will be the result in the house. May not the difference between such a furnace and one whose flue is unobstructed serve as a homely illustration of the difference between a person who is not filled with the Spirit and one who is so filled? In both furnaces all is favorable to produce heat, only one does not draw well because of the presence of what does not belong there. In every child of God the Spirit is present, but in one there is something which prevents him from doing all that he can and would, while the other's soul is free for Him "both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Some Things that hinder the Spirit's Working. I firmly believe that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride, and selfishness, and ambition, and self-seeking, and everything contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will come and fill every corner of our hearts; but if we are full of pride, and conceit, and ambition, and self-seeking, and pleasure, and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God; and I believe many a man is praying to God to fill him, when he is full already of something else. Before we pray that God would fill us, I believe we ought to pray Him to empty us. *D. L. Moody.*

What does the Spirit do? The normal, natural state for every Christian is to be filled with the Holy Ghost. I want to emphasize this, for men talk about being filled with the Holy Ghost as though it were a very peculiar and extraordinary experience to which few men attain, while the natural thing is this: to rise in the morning, to offer yourself to your Lord for the service of that day, and then believe that by His spirit He will empower you for all the duties of that day — and that is all there is to it. The duty of the day may be to preach to ten thousand people or to dress and care for the little child. The natural thing is to yield yourself to Christ, and therefore the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you will give you all the power you need for your special and specific work.

I really believe that the men truly filled with the Spirit are the men least conscious of that fact. When everything is normal physically you are not conscious of the physical organs, and when the respiration and circulation and the nervous functions are all natural you are not conscious of them. When everything is normal spiritually, you walk together with your Lord, you get into sweet fellowship with Him, He is guarding you all the time by His Spirit while you are probably not conscious of the Spirit. *Charles R. Erdman,* in *Princeton Review.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

God is for us — that is good; God is with us — that is better; God is in us — that is best. *Henry M. Booth.*

Our Paraclete in Heaven is Jesus Christ; our Paraclete on earth is the Holy Spirit. *John Robson.*

Our Heavenly Father dwelling with His Son in every heart which has kept

the great commandment and has been cleansed by love, is the Gospel of the Holy Ghost. *John Watson.*

We have no outside, distant, occasional Saviour, as the disciples had long ago; but His Spirit, His other Self, to abide with us, in us, to-day, to-morrow, forever. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

What you and I need is not to have more of the Holy Spirit, but to let the Holy Spirit have more of us. *Charles R. Erdman.*

How can the Three be One? you ask me; I answer by asking,
Hail and snow and rain, are they not three, and yet one? *Longfellow.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him; and make our abode with him. John 14. 23.

He giveth not the Spirit by measure. John 3. 34.

If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Gal. 5. 25.

Quench not the Spirit. 1 Thess. 5. 19.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Dr. Jewett says that many Christians are yet in the Pentecostal stage of development where the disciples of John the Baptist were when they said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghost." When we repeat the Creed we say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost;" what do we mean? Has the Holy Ghost a place in our creed, but not a place in our life? Truth is given us for life. Every doctrine involves a duty.

How may I obtain the gift of the Spirit? By asking my Heavenly Father. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," promised Christ. If I believe in Christ, I must believe in this promise.

How may I have more and more of the Holy Spirit? Bishop Tomkins answers: "If a man recognizes the gift and opens to it his heart and life and obeys all the noble impulses of the Spirit, then the gift becomes richer and richer. And when he gives himself up wholly to God's ruling, then he is 'full of the Holy Ghost' as was Stephen."

How may I know whether or not the Holy Spirit dwells in me and controls me? Paul has answered in his Epistle to the Galatians: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." I need only place that cluster of the fruit of the Spirit beside the fruit borne by my life. "Flowers," Longfellow says, "are animate spring-time;" we shall be animate Christianity if we are filled with the Spirit as the flowers are filled with spring-time.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The hour of Jesus' departure being at hand, He warns His disciples that their time of persecution is near, too. They shall be put out of the synagogue and shall be killed by those who so little know the Father and the Son that they think they are serving God in this way. Jesus would gladly have remained silent about these things, He tells them, and in the beginning while

He was with them He had not made these things real to them, for then they leaned on Him as children do upon their parents, and could not rightly apprehend the coming of trouble. Now, however, He is to leave them, and He warns them so that in the hour of their trial they may remember His prophecy, and the knowledge may strengthen them in their loyalty to such an omniscient Lord. Sorrow has filled their hearts, and they are too saddened by thoughts of separation from Jesus, and depressed by the dark future before them, to ask Him any questions about His departure. This Jesus tells them, and He adds that, strange as it may seem to them now, they shall live to see that His going away is really a blessing, for in His stead He will send the Comforter. The withdrawal of the visible Christ, present among them, was necessary in order that His Spirit might dwell in them.

The work of the Comforter, or Holy Spirit, Jesus explains. Bearing witness of the Saviour in the consciences of men, He will convince men of sin, for they sin if they believe not on Him, of the righteousness of the Crucified One, and of their own unrighteousness, and of judgment to come, because Satan at the coming of the Comforter shall have been judged already by Christ's death. Many things He could not tell them now because they could not bear it. The Spirit will enlighten them and guide them into all the truth; but He will not speak as from Himself; He will make plain to them things Christ Himself had taught them, He will declare things to come, He will glorify Christ.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The lesson we may learn from the fact that Christ could not teach all truth even to His disciples. See Paul's experience, 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2.

2. The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7. 39.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the account of Christ's agony in Gethsemane as told in Matt. 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22. 2. Where was the plot for the arrest of Jesus laid? (Matt. 26. 3–5; Mark 14. 10, 11; Matt. 26. 14–16.) 3. Why did the priests want Jesus put to death? (John 11. 47–53.) 4. What reasons can you give for Judas' deed? 5. Where does John say that Jesus had long known Judas would betray Him? (John. 6. 64, 70.) 6. How did Judas make Jesus known to the officers and soldiers in the garden? (Matt. 26. 47–50.) 7. What became of Judas? (Matt. 27. 1–10.) 8. When had the officers of the Sanhedrin been sent to take Jesus before this, and why did they fail in their mission? (John 7. 32, 45–48.) 9. What earlier lesson showed the awe inspired by Jesus' majesty and authority? (Jan. 26.) 10. What did Peter do at the arrest? (John 18. 10, 11.) 11. How did Jesus say He could have saved Himself? (Matt. 26. 53.) 12. What did He say to the multitude? (Matt. 26. 55, 56.) 13. What became of the other disciples? (Matt. 26. 31.) 14. Read the account of Peter's denial in the other Gospels. 15. What warning had Jesus given him? (Luke 22. 31–34.) 16. What explanations may be given for his denial? 17. How did he show his penitence? (Luke 22. 62.)

LESSON VII — MAY 17

JESUS BETRAYED AND DENIED

John 18. 1–9, 24–27. (Read John 18. 1–27.) Commit vv. 2, 3.

Golden Text

Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men. Matt. 17. 22.

LESSON TEXT 18. 1–9, 24–27 TIME Thursday night, Friday before day

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band of *men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he.* And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he,* they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he:* if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied *it,* and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *These words.* His last discourse and prayer. *Went forth.* From Jerusalem or from the upper room. *The brook.* R. V. margin, *ravine;* Greek, *winter-torrent. Cedron.* R. V., *Kidron. A garden.* Gethsemane. See Matt. 26. 36–46; Mark 14. 32–42; Luke 22. 39–46. *Into the which he entered, and His disciples.* R. V., *into which he entered, himself and his disciples.*

2. *And Judas also which.* R. V., *Now Judas also, who. Betrayed.* Compare Matt. 26. 47–56; Mark 14. 43–52; Luke 22. 47–53. *Oft-times.* See John 8. 1; Luke 21. 37; 22. 39.

3. *A band of men.* R. V., *the band of soldiers.* R. V. margin, *cohort.* A

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

cohort was a tenth part of a legion, and numbered six hundred men. This band of soldiers was doubtless a part of the Roman garrison of Antonia at the northeast corner of the temple. *Officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees.* The Levitical temple guard sent by the Sanhedrin. From Luke 22. 52 we learn that some of the priests accompanied them. *Lanterns and torches.* It was full moon at the time of the passover, but the soldiers were prepared for a cloudy night or for the possible attempt at hiding in the garden.

4. *All things that should come upon him.* R. V., *All the things that were coming upon him. Went forth.* Probably out from the group of disciples. *Said.* R. V., *saith.* Before this question the kiss of Judas was probably given. Compare Matt. 26. 45–50.

5. *Which betrayed him, stood with them.* R. V., *who betrayed him, was standing with them.*

6. *As soon then as he had said.* R. V., *When therefore he said. I am he.* "I am" (the pronoun *he,* necessary to the English, is wanting in the Greek) stands in Hebrew, as many have suggested, for God's unspeakable name, Jehovah, and may have added to the terror of the Levitical officers. See Ex. 3. 14.

7. *Then asked he them again.* R. V., *Again therefore he asked them.*

8. *I have told you.* R. V., *I told you. These.* His loyal disciples.

9. *The saying.* R. V., *the word. Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.* R. V., *Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one.* Compare John 17. 12.

24. *Now Annas had sent him.* R. V., *Annas therefore sent him.* Probably Annas and Caiaphas lived in different parts of the building. *Bound.* It is thought that during the examination he was freed.

25. *And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.* R. V., *Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself.* See verse 18, where the narrative was interrupted. *They.* The men standing with him. *Art not thou.* R. V., *Art thou. He denied it.* R. V., *He denied.*

26. *Being his kinsman whose ear.* R. V., *being a kinsman of him whose ear.* See verses 10 and 11, and Luke 22. 59.

27. *Then.* R. V., *therefore. Immediately.* R. V., *straightway.* The prophecy given in 13. 38 is fulfilled. Compare Matt. 26. 74. It was probably at this time that Jesus turned and looked on Peter, Luke 22. 61.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

5. *Judas who betrayed him.* Did Christ know from the beginning that Judas would betray Him, and yet, so knowing, did He choose him to be one of the disciples? Here we can only answer by indicating this as a canon in studying the life on earth of the God-Man, that it was part of his self-exinanition — of that emptying Himself, and taking upon Him the form of a servant — voluntarily to forego His divine knowledge in the choice of His human actions. So only could He, as perfect man, have perfectly obeyed the divine law. For, if the divine had determined Him in the choice of His actions there could have been no merit attaching to His obedience, nor could He be said to have, as perfect Man, taken our place, and to have obeyed the Law in our stead and as our Representative, nor yet be our ensample. *Alfred Edersheim*

THE BETRAYAL—*Tidey*

25. *He denied, and said, I am not.* All four of the Evangelists narrate this incident, but in different ways. Matthew, the publican, gives us a matter-of-fact statement, as passionless as an official tax-list. Luke, the beloved physician, enters somewhat more into particulars, as if making a diagnosis of the case; he alone mentions the intentness with which the damsel peered into Peter's face, alone says, "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter." John, the Apostle of charity and Peter's friend, relates the occurrence as briefly as possible, omitting its most harrowing details and making no mention whatever of the profanity. But Mark, who was Peter's personal companion and who probably wrote under his immediate dictation, recounts all. His account is in the nature of an autographical confession; its frankness reminds us of what Cromwell said to the court painter, "Portray me, scars and all." *David James Burrell.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *With lanterns.* In most oriental towns the local police regulations prohibit all persons from going about in the streets after one o'clock — that is, one hour after sunset,— unless carrying a lighted lantern. Paper lanterns are sold in the streets, generally at the tobacco-shops, to those who have been accidentally belated. Some of the lanterns in the better class of houses are very elaborate and ornamental, but those of the poorer class resemble the Chinese paper folding lanterns. *Albert L. Long,* in *S. S. Times.*

24. *Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.* Every town and village had its own court. The highest court of all, the Court of Appeals, as we might call it, was the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin passed laws, executed judgment, and dealt with questions of doctrine which in earlier days was the province of the High Priest alone. It was composed of seventy members, but "in penal jurisdiction, twenty-three members, called Beth Din (House of Justice) was authorized to act," says Dr. Charles F. Sitterly, "and it is probable that on the night when Jesus was arrested the members hurriedly called together at the house of Annas were not more than that number." The Sanhedrin had power to execute all save capital sentences. The case of a man whom they judged worthy of death must be retried before the Roman Governor, and only Roman soldiers could execute Roman decrees. Therefore after Jesus was sentenced by Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, He was hurried to Pilate.

25. *He denied, and said, I am not.* The reputation that Peter thus won for weakness and cowardice followed him, so that the tradition arose that during Nero's terrible persecution, when Christians were set on fire as torches in his gardens, and were put to brutal death in the Roman amphitheater, he fled in terror from Rome. A few miles from the city he had a vision of the Saviour. *Domine, quo vadis,*— Lord, whither goest Thou,— Peter cried. With a look that vividly recalled to Peter the look he had received from his Saviour in Pilate's judgment Hall, Christ returned, "I go to Rome to be crucified the second time." It was enough. Peter turned back and witnessed boldly for Christ until he was himself crucified head downward for the sake of his Lord and Saviour.

27. *The cock crew.* Barnyard fowls swarm around every door, share in the food of their possessors, are at home among the children in every room,

roost overhead at night, and with their ceaseless crowing serve for town clock and morning bell. *Thomson.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Beyond the Kidron Valley, which winds around the eastern side of Jerusalem, is the Mount of Olives, whose steep side was cultivated in rude terraces. Somewhere on its slope was Gethsemane. The traditional site is on the road to the mountain summit. From His arrest in Gethsemane Jesus was taken to the palace of the high priest in Jerusalem.

Peter Repentant
From a Fresco in the Roman Catacombs

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"A little while, and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me," continued Jesus in His farewell discourse to His disciples. The perplexed disciples wondered what He meant. They should weep, Jesus told them, but their sorrow should be turned into joy; He had spoken in proverbs, but now He would speak plainly; He was returning to the Father from whom He came. The hour was coming when they would desert Him, but His Father would be with Him. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," are His last ringing, exultant words to them. The farewell prayer follows, which has been described as "The simplest in language, the profoundest in meaning, in the whole Bible." In the opening verses, thinking of His speedy departure to the glory which He shared with God before the world was, He prays for Himself. Next He prays for His disciples, to whom He had manifested His Father's name and who had believed that God had sent Him; "Keep them in Thy name (the knowledge of Thee), which (name) Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are." Then His thought includes all who are to come after, who shall believe on Him through the word of the disciples; "that they all may be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us." His prayer closes with these beautiful words, "that the love whereunto thou lovest Me may be in them, and I in them."

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In what city did Mary and Martha and Lazarus live? On what slope of what mountain was it situated? In what direction was it from Jerusalem? What ravine lay between Jerusalem and the Mount

of Olives? Every evening during His last week on earth, until the last evening, Jesus had gone out from Jerusalem to this Bethany home to spend the night. His last evening was spent with His disciples in Jerusalem. What example of humble service for others did He give them there? What did He say one of His disciples was going to do? What did He say another disciple would do? What were some of the words of comfort He spoke at this time?

As midnight approached, Jesus and eleven of His disciples left Jerusalem. Which disciple was missing? They crossed over the brook, or ravine, called Kidron, but they did not keep on around the Mount of Olives as far as Bethany. Where did they stop? Have any of you a garden? What is planted in it? Is it a sunny or a shady place? When we speak of a garden we have in mind an open space gay with flowers or green with plants and vegetables. In the East a garden resembles rather what we call an orchard. It is a shady place, planted with fruit-trees and fragrant shrubs. What was this garden called to which Jesus went with His disciples? The word Gethsemane means oil-press; probably there were olive trees and an oil-press in the garden. No one knows just where this particular garden was; there is now a plot of ground called the Garden of Gethsemane which is visited by all travelers to the Holy Land. It has been surrounded by a wall and laid out in walks and flower-beds somewhat like our gardens, and it has eight ancient olive trees. In Palestine the owner has to pay a tax on every fruit-tree he possesses, and it is known that a tax has been paid on these trees back to the year 636, so you see, they are very, very old. We know they can not be the trees under which Jesus walked, not only because trees do not live so long, but also because it is known that when Jerusalem was destroyed Titus ordered all the trees round about cut down.

For Older Pupils. It is the night of the betrayal. With His eleven disciples Jesus has left Jerusalem, crossed the brook Kidron and entered the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Eight of the disciples remain at a distance; nearer Jesus are the three best beloved, Peter, James, and John. These three were bidden to watch with Him, but their eyes were heavy, and they have fallen asleep. Three times Jesus comes back to them, feeling the need of their sympathetic presence, but each time finds them sleeping. In His tender compassion He only says, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Three times Jesus prays to His Heavenly Father in an anguish we can not understand, believing only that it was occasioned by the sins of others, prays that He may be saved this suffering and death before Him, but prays submissively, gaining strength with each uttered petition, and from the struggle He comes calm and confident, His will at one with His Father's will.

There are two lonely figures in this scene. Jesus alone in the garden, alone with God; and Judas on his way to the garden, a crowd with him, but alone with his infamous thoughts. Greater contrast thought can not grasp.

When the people would force upon Jesus a crown He fled from them; when they came out with lanterns and torches and weapons, He goes forth to meet them.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I A Study of Judas

The Motives for his Deed. Various have been the explanations of Judas' dastardly deed. The popular theory is that he was led on to his crime by his

love of money. Covetous he undoubtedly was; "a thief," John declares him, but his position as keeper of the funds was worth more to him than the few pieces of silver he received for betraying Jesus, and had his been a miserly nature actuated solely by greed the thirty pieces would have satisfied him for a time, and he had not so soon repented.

He sought to give Jesus an opportunity to show His power and escape from His enemies, some have claimed; his sin was merely that of presumption, a desire to force Jesus to proclaim Himself King, others have declared. But had either supposition been correct, Jesus had not said of him, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

Dr. W. Boyd Carpenter's theory is that Judas played a game in the hope of winning whichever side was victorious, Jesus or the priestly party. He saw the conflict coming, and thought he had made himself secure with each. He did not break with the disciples. His Master was condemned and all his hopes in that direction disappeared. He visited the priests, and with an affectation of misgiving, expressed doubts concerning his own action, expecting them to laugh at his misgivings and belaud him as a patriot who deserved well of the powers that be. But he was quickly undeceived, for in their eyes he was nothing but a paid spy. "What is that to us," they answered him. He had lost. He departed and went and hanged himself.

Judas was avaricious, and, like James and John and the other disciples, he was also ambitious and self-seeking. While the two brothers were disappointed in their hopes of worldly preferment, deceived in their expectation that Jesus would be proclaimed king and they would be great in His Kingdom, their devotion to their Lord was nevertheless so loyal that they overcame their self-interest and mastered their disappointment. Judas' baffled ambition turned his loyalty to hatred, and his hatred led to treacherous revenge.

The Course of Benedict Arnold. In the early part of the war with Great Britain he displayed great courage and was advanced in rank, but not so rapidly as he thought was his due; others were advanced before he was, and his disappointment and jealousy, increased by charges brought against him by those who disliked him, as well as his greed for money, led him to betray his country. He had obtained command of West Point, and for £6,300 reward from the British government, he made arrangements to surrender it to the British army; afterwards he joined the enemy and fought with them against his countrymen.

II Peter's Fall

Why he fell. Dr. George Adam Smith had climbed a steep mountain in Switzerland and wished to mount a rock on the summit in order to enjoy the grand prospect. But his experienced guide seized his arm, exclaiming, "You must kneel down, you can not stand up there without becoming dizzy. Only on your knees can you look about you."

Peter had climbed upward in his courageous journey with His Master. His nature was bold and venturesome. "Though all men should deny Thee, yet will not I" had been his proud boast of moral courage, a boast which he had made good when he showed himself at the arrest ready to fight single-handed his Lord's enemies, and when he followed Him while the other disciples fled. He had climbed upward so far that he thought all danger for him was past, and he stood in a place of danger around that court fire confident in his own

strength, when he should have heeded the warning given him by his Guide, and on his knees only ventured into temptation. He had not watched in the garden, he did not pray in the hour of temptation, and his courage, which he thought all-sufficient, quailed and gave way. He was over-confident, confident in his own powers rather than in God's help. Courageous as he thought he was, he showed himself in that hour of testing a moral coward. Because he was afraid of the contempt and sneers of a slave-girl, he denied his Lord; one lie always leads to others, the other two denials followed as a matter of course.

Where do We stand? Now, when you read how Peter declared with oaths and curses that he knew not Jesus, what do you think with reference to yourself? If, when we read that account, we feel, "I would never do that," then we are in a place of peril. If, on the other hand, we feel like praying, "O God, keep me by Thy power, lest I fall in such a way," then we are in a place of safety. The man who is positive he will not deny Christ is the very one who is in danger of denying Him first. The spirit of self-assertion and of self-satisfaction can not live in the region of close communion with Christ. The nearer to Christ we come, the greater in some respects is our sense of distance from Him. The better we know the Master the more we see our own imperfections, and the more we tremble because of our own weakness. We may have a confidence that Christ can keep, but it is very different from the self-confidence which leads us to say that we shall never fall. *G. Campbell Morgan.*

Strength that comes from God. I believe the secret of more failures in Christian life and Christian service is found in reliance on our own strength than in anything else. I meet constantly men and women from whom the greatest things are expected when they accept the Lord Jesus Christ. We say, "There is a young woman of intellectual power, a woman of great natural force of character; that woman is now converted, and she will be a power for God;" yet time and again this great expectation is lamentably disappointed. She amounts to nothing for God. Then I have seen some one with a very weak natural character; very little force, and people have said, "Well, I am glad she is converted, but she will never amount to much," and yet many a time have I seen such a woman become a great center of power. Why? Because the one who had the native strength relied upon it, and the one who had no strength knew it and relied upon God.

But to renounce one's own strength is quite possible for one who is naturally strong. Paul was a man of great natural strength of character, almost unparalleled natural gifts; but when Paul came to Jesus Christ, he renounced all his native strength and looked to the Lord Jesus Christ for his strength; and instead of the great natural abilities of Paul, he got the supernatural abilities of God. *R. A. Torrey,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

III Peter's Victory

The Height to which he mounted. Peter on the Day of Pentecost is as superior to Peter in Pilate's courtyard, as a stalwart man is to a puny, stumbling child. He had risen with Christ and into Christ. He had been baptized with a clearer illumination, and lifted into a close, vital, and victorious union with his Lord. It was a prodigious push that carried the sleeper in Gethsemane and the coward in Pilate's yard up to the heroic thunderer on the day of Pentecost whose sermon converted three thousand souls. *Theodore L. Cuyler.*

The Lesson of Defeat. There is comfort in these words of Madame Swetchine: "Strength alone knows conflict; weakness is below even defeat, and is born vanquished." No matter how many failures one may make in a Christian experience, the ideal toward which he is striving may yet be attained if he learns the lesson each failure brings and steadfastly and courageously pursues his onward course. Longfellow tells us this in his poem on *The Sifting of Peter:*

Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and make
Confession;
Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before
Transgression.
But noble souls, through dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger;
And conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer.

A Fall is a Signal to rise. A fall is not a signal to lie wallowing, but to rise.

It is not the signal I should choose, yet it is the signal I have chosen.
Having chosen it wrongly, let me at least obey it rightly. *Christina Rossetti.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Few things are so stumbling as our conceit of ourselves. *Henry Churchill King.*

Before we sin, it is the gain we see; after we sin, the guilt. *Marcus Dods.*

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. *Confucius.*

Temptation is the one certainty, — the one immediate certainty, before us all. *George Adam Smith.*

The best rose-bush, after all, is not that which has the fewest thorns, but that which bears the finest roses. *Henry van Dyke.*

No iron bar is absolutely infrangible; its strength is tested by the weight which it bears without breaking; no soul is absolutely impeccable; it seems as if all we can dare to ask even of the holiest is how much temptation he can bear without giving way. *F. W. Robertson.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. 10. 12.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. John 18. 36.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Matt. 26. 41.

Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me; but I lay it down of myself. John 10. 17, 18.

He that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool. Prov. 28. 25, 26.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

In whose strength am I trusting, my own or God's? Do I say that I am never going to deny Christ, or do I pray God to keep me from denying Him? I am weak, this I know; but I may be "confident in self-despair," as Wesley says in his hymn, for I may say with truth that when I am weak then am I strong in the power from on high.

I need the lesson of Peter's penitence as well as of his fall. I will commit to memory and to heart these beautiful words of Christina Rossetti's: —

O Jesus, gone so far apart
Only my heart can follow Thee,
That look which pierced St. Peter's heart
Turn now on me.
Thou who dost search me through and through,
And mark the crooked ways I went,
Look on me, Lord, and make me, too,
Thy penitent.

If Peter had been arrested with Jesus and had been scourged he doubtless would have endured it bravely and remained loyal to his Master through it all. For such a great crisis he was prepared. It was the little, unexpected temptation that proved his undoing. Do I know what it is to make up my mind to some act of real self-sacrifice for others, and then to lose my temper under some little, annoying provocation?

It is a terrible thought that Judas was with Jesus and yet was made worse instead of better by the companionship. It is an equally true and equally terrible thought that we may be made worse by our familiarity with Christ's life and teachings. If we do not heed His words our hearts are becoming hardened, like the ground by the wayside into which no seed can penetrate and bear fruit.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

After a long farewell conversation with his disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem, and His final intercessory prayer, Jesus with the eleven left the city, crossed the brook Kidron, traversed the slope of the Mount of Olives, and entered the garden of Gethsemane.

The agony in the garden John omits, and takes us with him in thought to Judas who had left the company before the institution of the Lord's Supper. He had gone to the chief priests and reported that the time was ripe for the arrest of Jesus. If Jesus had already left Jerusalem he was confident he would find him in the garden where he often went. Accompanied by a band of Roman soldiers and the Levitical guard, all armed with weapons and provided with lanterns and torches, he sought that sacred meeting-place. Jesus in the full knowledge of all that was about to happen, left the little group of disciples and went forward to meet His adversaries. John does not mention that Judas betrayed his Lord with a kiss, but his remark that "Judas also, who betrayed Him, was standing with them," shows us that disciple who had lived on such close terms of intimacy with Jesus, who had accepted His love, who but a few

hours earlier had received bread from His hands, now standing among His enemies, the guide of those who would put his Friend to death!

"Whom seek ye?" Jesus quickly asked. "Jesus of Nazareth," was the reply. "I am He." Before such calm courage, conscious innocence, and majestic mien, the officers quailed. No one would be the first to lay hands on Him, and stumbling backward they fell to the ground. A second time Jesus asked the same question and received the same answer. "I told you that I am He," a third time Jesus asserted, and reminded them that they have come for Him alone, and not for His disciples. Impulsive Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, a stewart of the high priest. "Put up the sword" said Jesus to him. "The cup which the Father hath given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?" Then they seized Jesus, bound Him, and led Him away to Annas.

John followed, and being known to the high priest was allowed to enter the court. Peter also followed, but "afar": when he reached the door the maid was about to refuse him entrance when John bade her admit him. She asked him if he were not one of "this man's disciples," and he, fearing her taunts, cowardly denied.

He joined a group of officers and servants around a fire in the court, and one of them asked him the same question. Again Peter denied. A kinsman of Malchus, believing that his eyes did not deceive him, said, "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" A third time Peter denied, and then he heard the cock crow and remembered Jesus' warning, "The cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." As Jesus was being led from Annas to Caiaphas in another part of the palace, He turned and looked at Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Was Peter a man morally brave who fell through too great self-confidence, or was he a man morally cowardly who rose to deeds of moral courage through love for Christ?

2. "There is in this community to-day an amount of right conviction, which, if it were set free into right action by complete release from moral cowardice, would be felt through the land." *Phillips Brooks.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the account of the death and burial of Jesus in Matt. 27, Mark 15, and Luke 23. 2. Write an account of the crucifixion in your own words, combining the Gospel accounts. 3. Write an account of the burial of Jesus and the precautions taken to prevent His body being stolen. 4. What was the accusation against Jesus before the Sanhedrin? (Matt. 26. 61–66.) 5. What was the charge before Pilate? (Luke 23. 2.) 6. What was the accusation written over the cross? (John 19. 19.) 7. What was Pilate's own decision? (Matt. 27. 18, 24; Luke 23. 4.) 8. What was Herod's? (Luke 23. 14, 15.) 9. What was the centurion's decision at the cross? (Luke 23. 47.) 10. What are the seven words from the cross? (1) (Luke 23. 34); (2) (Luke 23. 43); (3) (John 19. 26, 27); (4) (Matt. 27. 46; Mark 15. 34); (5) (John 19. 28); (6) (John 19 30); (7) (Luke 23. 46). 11. Who was Josepth of Arimathæa? (Matt. 27. 57–60; Mark 15. 43; Luke 23. 50, 51; John 19. 38.)

LESSON VIII — MAY 24

JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL

John 19. 28–42. (Read John 19. 17–42.) Commit vv. 39, 40.

Golden Text

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. I Cor. 15. 3.

LESSON TEXT John 19. 28–42 TIME Friday, morning till evening, April 7, A. D. 30

28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.
29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.
30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.
31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.
32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.
33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:
34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
35 And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.
36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.
37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.
38 And after this Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.
39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.
40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.
41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.
42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day;* for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

28. *After this.* During the interval probably occurred the darkness, and the cry of Jesus narrated in Matt. 27. 45, 46; Mark 15. 33, 34. *Were now accomplished,* R. V., *are now finished. That the scripture might be fulfilled* (R.

V., *accomplished.*) This clause may belong either with the preceding or the succeeding clause; it may mean that "Jesus now permitted Himself to express His sense of bodily suffering. (I thirst), because He knew that His duty was completely discharged and prophecy fulfilled," or it may mean that "in the complaint and the response to it, John sees a fulfillment of Psa. 69. 21." Compare John 17. 4.

29. R. V., *There was set there a vessel full of vinegar; so that they put a sponge of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to His mouth.* The vinegar was the *posca,* the sour wine which was the customary drink of Roman soldiers. What the hyssop was is not known. The cross was but slightly elevated, and with a sponge fastened to the end of a reed a foot or two in length they could easily reach His mouth.

30. *It is finished.* He has accomplished God's purpose. *Gave up.* Voluntarily. *The ghost.* R. V., *His spirit.* See Luke 23. 46.

31. *The preparation.* Friday, the day before the Passover Sabbath. *Upon the Sabbath day.* R. V., *upon the Sabbath. For that Sabbath-day was an high day.* R. V., *for the day of that Sabbath was a high day.* It was a "high day" because it was both the weekly Sabbath and the first day of the Passover festival. *Besought.* R. V., *asked of.*

32. *Then came the soldiers.* R. V., *the soldiers therefore came.* Perhaps the four; see verse 23. *Which.* R. V., *that.* See verse 18.

34. *But.* R. V., *howbeit. A spear.* "The Roman *hasta,* having an oval point that could make a gaping wound into which the hand might be thrust." 20. 27. *New-Century Bible. Forthwith came there.* R. V., *straightway there came.*

35. R. V., *And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.* John speaks of himself here in the third person. He appreciates the importance of certifying to the death of Jesus, for he is about to narrate the resurrection.

36. *Were done.* R. V., *came to pass. The scripture.* See Ex. 12. 46; Num. 9. 12; Psa. 34. 20. These passages refer to the Paschal lamb; and John the Evangelist, like John the Baptist (John 1. 29), sees in Jesus the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world. *Should be.* R. V., *might be.*

37. *Another scripture.* Zech. 12. 10.

38. *After this.* R. V., *After these things. Besought.* R. V., *asked of. And took the body of Jesus.* R. V., *and took away his body.*

39. *Which at the first came to Jesus by night.* R. V., *he who at the first came to him by night. And brought.* R. V., *bringing. A mixture of myrrh and aloes.* "Myrrh was a fragrant gum, and aloes a sweet-scented wood, which, being pounded together, were placed on the linen which swathed the body." *Reith. About an hundred pound weight.* R. V., *about a hundred pounds.* The Roman pound was nearly twelve ounces. The large quantity has been explained as being the lavish gift of a rich man, and as being designed also for the sepulchre. 2 Chron. 16. 14 describes the burial of Asa "in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices prepared by the perfumers' art."

40. *Then took they.* R. V., *So they took. Wound.* R. V., *bound. The manner.* R. V., *the custom.* John explains for his Gentile readers.

41. *In the place.* In the neighborhood. Verse 42. *Sepulchre.* R. V., *tomb.* Hewn out of a rock. Matt. 27. 60.

42. R. V., *There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was*

nigh at hand) *they laid Jesus.* *Preparation.* See verse 31. And rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb. Matt. 27. 60.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

28. *Jesus knowing that all things are now finished.* He who reads the story of Calvary with a sense only of its tragic elements, reads it wrongly; there were also triumphal elements, equally plain and definite. The chief way in which we are able to perceive the triumphant element in the cross, is by remembering how Christ Himself spoke of the cross, and in what spirit He approached it. You will remember two things: first, that Christ spoke of the cross very early in His ministry, and, second, that He always spoke of it as something predetermined. Did He not distinctly declare that He laid down His life, but that no man took it from Him; and do we not find at every point of the unfolding tragedy the reiteration of that phrase so constantly associated with the incident of His infancy — "that it might be fulfilled"? When once we grasp this truth the sense of the merely tragic in Calvary is lost in the sense of the purely triumphant. We see the various actors in the drama — Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate — all falling into place, as at some mystic signal; each doing something that had to be done, each doing something dictated by the grossness of his nature, and thus something for which he is answerable: but also doing something that was an unconscious fulfillment of a program; and Jesus Himself passed through all these scenes with the sublime steadfastness of one who knows that thus it must be. This is the joy of the cross. Jesus has not lost His way. He moves steadily to His goal. He is no victim of accident — at every step something was done which was long predicted, something that the will of God made necessary and inevitable. *W. J. Dawson, The Reproach of Christ.*

34. *There came out blood and water.* St. John alone recounts the incident, and it was evidently wholly inexplicable to him. He could only asseverate solemnly that he had beheld it with his own eyes. Yet it is in no wise incredible; and medical science has confirmed the Evangelist's testimony, and has so explained the phenomenon that it sheds light upon the death of our Lord and reveals somewhat of the anguish of His Passion. Jesus died literally of a broken heart — of "agony of mind, producing rupture of the heart." His heart swelled with grief until it burst, and then the blood was "effused into the distended sac of the pericardium, and afterwards separated, as is usual with extravasated blood, into these two parts, red clot and watery serum." *David Smith, The Days of His Flesh.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

31. *The bodies should not remain on the cross upon the Sabbath.* The law according to Deuteronomy 21. 22, 23, was: "And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God; that thou defile not thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." The Sabbath began at sunset and was now close at hand. It was an especially holy day, because both the Sabbath and the day of the great feast, and the Jews would not have the land made Levitically unclean on that day. It was the Roman custom

to leave bodies on the cross to be devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey.

31. *The Jews asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken.* This was a Roman custom called the *crurifragium.* It was possible for a crucified one to live even thirty-six hours, and by this practice his death was hastened. The instep or ankle was struck with an iron mallet or bar, breaking the bones, and leaving the weight of the body to be borne by the hands and support of the cross.

38. *Pilate gave him leave.* According to Roman law, avaricious governors sometimes sold this privilege. Cicero, in one of his orations against Verres, has a terribly graphic passage describing such extortions. After dwelling upon the tortures inflicted upon the condemned, he says: "Yet death is the end. It shall not be. Can cruelty go further? A way shall be found. For the bodies of the beheaded shall be thrown to the beasts. If this is grievous to parents, they may buy the liberty of burial." *M. R. Vincent, Word Studies.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In the high priest's house Jesus was tried first by Annas and then by Caiaphas. The formal condemnation before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin was given either in the same place or in the council-chamber within the temple enclosure. Then Jesus was taken to Pilate's Prætorium, whose traditional location is the castle Antonia, in the northwestern corner of the temple area, but many scholars think that it was more probably the summer palace of Herod, on the northern slope of Mount Zion. After being taken to Herod's residence and back again to the Prætorium where He was sentenced to death, He was led to Golgotha to be crucified. The Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrow, leads to the traditional site of Golgotha, about a quarter of a mile west from the northwest corner of the temple, near the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Modern scholars, however, accept as the true site a knoll, shaped like a skull, outside of the city on the north not far from St. Stephen's Gate. Not far away was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa, in which Jesus was buried.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The trial of Jesus was sixfold: three times before the Jewish authorities, and three before Roman officials. The preliminary trial before Annas is given by John. Annas had been high priest, and seems to have retained the title. As Annas failed to entrap Him, He was brought before Caiaphas, the high priest, and an informal committee of the Sanhedrin, and later before a regular meeting of this Jewish court. The last two Jewish trials are narrated in the Synoptic Gospels. John passes them by and hastens on to the more decisive trial before the Roman governor Pilate, who alone had power to condemn Him to death. In the ecclesiastical trial before the Sanhedrin they had accused Jesus of blasphemy; now in the civil trial they are forced to find other charges, and they accuse Him of perverting the nation, of forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar, and of setting himself up as a King. Pilate questioned Jesus and returned his verdict to the mob, he had found no crime in Jesus, and he would release Him. The announcement was received with rage and repeated charges that He had stirred up the people "throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee unto this place." The mention of Galilee reminded Pilate that he could refer Jesus to Herod, the ruler

of Galilee. Luke tells of this attempt to shift responsibility, and of Jesus' silence before Herod and of His return to Pilate. Again and again Pilate sought to release Jesus, but the mob, urged on by the priests, demanded that He be crucified. Pilate sent Him to be scourged — the usual preliminary to crucifixion — and had Him brought before them again, a crown of thorns on His head and a purple robe about Him; and hoping that this would satisfy them, Pilate said, "Behold the man!" Yet louder arose their cries of "Crucify Him." Then they used their last argument with Pilate. "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." Afraid of the complaint they might bring against him to Cæsar, Pilate yielded to their will. He delivered Jesus up unto them to be crucified.

Christ on the Cross. From a Painting in the Roman Catacombs

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Outside of the wall of Jerusalem there is a low, bare knoll, gently rounded in shape like a skull. This knoll we call Calvary, from a Latin word which means a skull. Hither all Jerusalem has come to watch the death of one Man, the Man for whose death this mob of people have clamored; "Crucify Him, crucify Him," they have cried to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, till he has yielded to their will. There He hangs nailed to a cross. Above His head a board is fastened to the cross on which is written, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." On either side are other crosses to which two thieves are nailed. John, the beloved disciple, stands near by with a group of sorrowing women, Jesus' mother, His mother's sister, Mary Magdalene, and another Mary.

There is another group not far away; four Roman soldiers who have each claimed one of the garments, the turban, the under-coat, the girdle, the sandals, and now they are throwing dice for His large, seamless, outer garment. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" had been Jesus' tender words as these men had nailed Him to the cross.

For Older Pupils. In the museum at Antwerp there is a picture called *The Dead Christ,* painted by Vandyke. The Saviour lies at the foot of the cross, His head supported in His mother's arms. John is pointing to the motionless figure and looking at two angels who stand near; his face is full of amazement and he seems to be asking them whether this is the end of all their hopes, but the angels have hidden their faces in their hands. On Mary's face shines the explanation. She is looking up to God exultantly; her divine Son has accomplished the work that God gave Him to do.

The Life of sorrow is ended in tragedy, the poverty and shame and persecution endured have culminated in a criminal's death; but it is a triumphant, glorious death, a death that was the greatest victory the world has ever known.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I It is Finished

What had Christ finished? He had spoken repeatedly of His time, His hours, His day. He had said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work." The night had come to Him, and He was passing through it to the new morning of His glory. Finished, therefore, was His day's work in the body.

Finished was the Jewish age. In another moment the veil of the temple would be rent in twain. The scroll of law, psalm, and prophecy would be closed and sealed with His blood. It was complete in Him even from the beginning, for the "seed of the woman had bruised the serpent's head."

Finished was the manifestation in His person of God's creative idea in humanity. He had revealed the new name "Father" in a real, human relation made perfect by suffering, achieved by faith, patience, and courage. God had been brought near, "so loving the world that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Finished was the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, in His perfect obedience even unto the death of the cross. Exacted in the eternal counsels of the divine righteousness, God was satisfied in Him.

Finished was the founding of His church in the hearts of His chosen ones. "Other foundation could no man lay than that which was now laid" in humanity. All that should be erected upon it in the history of organized Christianity should be abiding only as it is built upon the "foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." *Thomas A. Jaggar.*

Human Lives that are Finished. A young man of brilliant promise was twenty-seven years old when he entered the ministry. Four years in college, two years in a theological school, and then three years in study abroad he spent in preparing himself for his life work. After two years of helpful, vital work, he went down in a wreck at sea. What a terrible pity that he died so young, every one said; what a loss to the world. If he only could have lived and labored twenty, thirty, forty years, what might he not have accomplished? And yet, may not his have been a finished life as God judges? What is a finished life?

In Westminster Abbey there stands a beautiful cradle of alabaster, with an infant's face showing above the coverlet. It is the tomb of Sophia, daughter of James I, who died in 1607 at the age of three days. And this is the epitaph:

"When the archangel's trump shall blow, and souls to bodies join,
Millions will wish their lives below had been as short as thine."

"He lives long who lives well, and time misspent is not lived but lost," said Richard Fuller. The young theological student had lived well, he had accomplished the work given him to do, "And in short measures life may perfect be."

Human Lives that are Ended. At this moment in the world there are hundreds of thousands of human beings whose earthly lives are ending. And what is it in each case that is ending? A butterfly existence? A life of selfishness? Or the life of one of whom it may be said, He has finished the work that God gave him to do?

A severe critic has said that the average girl's horizon is bounded on the

north by her clothes, on the south by her social relations, on the east by her private hopes, and on the west by her income. Then is the average boy's horizon bounded on the north by his sports, on the south by his friends, on the east by his prospects, and on the west by his worldly ambition? Do four such solid walls shut out from average young people the light of intellectual pursuits and the light of the Son of Righteousness?

II Christ died for our Sins according to the Scripture

Our Part in the Atonement. The first celebration of the passover was confined to one night. The killing of the lamb, the sprinkling of the blood, the eating of the roast flesh with girt-up loins, were the chief observances. But mingled with these was one, which, though at first subordinate, grew in the after institution to be, if not the first, the pervasive characteristic of the feast. Leaven was put out of their homes ere the lamb was sacrificed. You can not come to shelter under atoning blood until, in resolve at least, and so far as is immediately practicable in act, you determine to have done with sin. And when the blood was sprinkled on the doorpost, and safe within they began to eat the flesh, it was with unleavened bread. You can have life from the atoning death of Christ, only as you renounce and repudiate sin, and abide weaned from and dead to its impulses and allurements. *John Smith,* in *The Permanent Message of the Exodus.*

The Difficulty of understanding the Atonement. A student went to a professor of theology, and asked him how long it took him to understand the Atonement. The professor thought a minute, then looked him in the face. "Eternity," he said, "eternity; and I won't understand it then."

We are dealing with facts; we need not be distressed if we do not understand them. God's love — how could we? God's forgiveness — how could we? *Henry Drummond,* in *The Ideal Life.*

What All can understand. A missionary went to a town in Mesopotamia to labor among the Syrians, Mohammedans, and others there; thirteen long years he toiled among them before he had a single convert. "Your words sound well," they told him, "but we can not understand them. Why should you come to us with these words? Why are you not content to leave us as we were?" Then came the cholera. Those who could, fled, leaving the sick to die uncared for. The missionary stayed. He went into home after home and cared for the stricken ones, till at last, his life utterly spent with weariness, he succumbed himself to the disease. Those whom he had saved bore his body without the city wall and tenderly buried it.

Long afterwards another missionary came to that city. He expected to find the work of his predecessor forgotten, but nine miles out from the city the people met him with great joy. They took him to a grove outside the city and showed him a grave. "This is the grave of the man who died for us," they told him. They understood now the words the missionary had spoken, and they built a fine large stone church and dedicated it to his memory and to the service of the God whom he served.

Jesus lived and labored among men, and comparatively few there were who understood His teachings. And then He gave His life for them upon the cross, and marvelous was the growth in numbers of His followers. He had died for their sins. How His death was an atonement, an at-one-ment, reconciling them

to God, they could perhaps not understand, but the sacrifice of the cross they could see, and the power of the cross they could feel, for being lifted up He drew all men unto Him.

III The Old, Old Story

New News. One day the poet Tennyson was calling on an old couple living in his neighborhood, and he said to them, "What is the news?" The woman's answer was unexpected; "I know of no news except that Jesus Christ died for the whole world." "That is old news, and good news, and new news," the poet replied.

The old news, and even the good news, of Christ's proof of His love for the world we realize, but we need now and then to hear how the news sounds to one who hears it for the first time in order that it may seem new news to us.

The Superintendent of the London Police said that a clergyman visited a noted criminal in his cell and told him the story of Jesus' death on the cross for sinners. He had listened in silence, but he suddenly sprang to his feet exclaiming, "Is it true? He came to save men like me?" "Yes," returned the clergyman; "it is true." "And you sit here quietly," retorted the man. "If I believed that story and were free, I would walk barefoot over the world but I would tell it to every living man."

Rag and Dan. Mrs. Mason had two street Arabs in her mission Sunday-school class, called Rag and Dan. One Sunday she was teaching them our lesson of to-day, and explaining to them that Jesus willingly gave up His life as a ransom for the sins of the whole world. "Don't believe it!" suddenly exclaimed Rag. "Now look-a-here!" he continued earnestly. "Me'n' Dan don't believe no such thing as that. It's a fake, that's wot it is. 'Tain't accordin' to reason for anybody to act that way. You go down Fourth Street, and you hit a feller over the head, and he'll giv you one back, he will for sure, if he's big enough. But you say this Man you're talkin' about could do anything He wanted to; and yet He let them galoots around Him get Him into a corner and do Him up! Well, I guess not!" "Not much!" echoed Dan.

That Sunday and for many Sundays afterward Mrs. Mason taught her boys about the life and motives and divinity of Jesus, till conviction dawned in their hearts. "Is this all straight, teacher? Are you sure you ain't givin' us no bluff?" asked Rag. "Yes, Rag, I'm sure. It's no bluff, it's straight." "Wot d'you think of it, Dan?" he then questioned his follower. "I tell you, Rag, it's straight goods, just as she says," Dan replied. "She's never went back on us yet, an' you bet she ain't going back on us now. I believe it."

"Yes, I guess it must be straight," slowly admitted Rag, and then with sudden energy, he exclaimed, "But, say, if He done all that for a fellow, how a fellow ought to love Him!"

SENTENCE SERMONS

Can anything be sadder than work left unfinished? Yes, work never begun. *Christina Rossetti.*

The Christian life is the only life that will ever be completed. *Drummond.*

Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st
Live well; how long or short, permit to heaven. *Milton.*

You may be through with your sin, but your sin is not through with you unless you have settled it at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ. *John R. Mott.*

Archimedes wanted a fulcrum on which to place a lever, and then he said he could move the world; Calvary is the fulcrum, and the cross of Christ is the lever; by that power all nations shall be lifted. *Talmage.*

But now Thou art in the Shadowless Land,
Behind the light of the setting Sun;
And the worst is forgotten which Evil planned,
And the best which Love's glory could win is won. *Sir Edwin Arnold.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. John 1. 29.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3. 14–16.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. John 12. 32.

Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Rev. 5. 12.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Jesus was as keenly sensitive to suffering as any human being. He knew the agony that was before Him. and He went forth to meet it bravely, but only after He had sought help from God in prayer. Only in the same way shall I be able bravely to meet trouble.

If I can think of the crucifixion of Christ knowing that He thus suffered for my sins, and yet can be unmoved and indifferent to Him, how different am I from those soldiers who parted His garments among them and then sat down and watched Him with cruel indifference?

Jesus had finished His part of God's work; am I doing my part?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Near the city of Jerusalem was a place called Golgotha, the place of a skull. There they crucified Jesus between two thieves. The four soldiers who crucified Him divided His raiment, and for the coat without seam they cast lots. Standing by the cross were the mother of Jesus, Her sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Mary Magdalene and John. In all His suffering and anguish of soul, Jesus thought of His mother. "Woman, behold thy son" said He to her, and "Behold, thy mother," were His words to John, His beloved disciple. Henceforth John's home was Mary's.

"Knowing that all things were now finished," Jesus permitted Himself to utter the only words from the cross that expressed His physical suffering, "I

thirst," and John sees in the words the fulfillment of Psalm 69. 21: "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." They dipped a sponge fastened on a branch of hyssop in a dish of sour wine and brought it to His mouth. Jesus received the drink. Matthew records the cry of agony, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"; Luke records the cry of faith, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!"; John records the triumphant cry that He had completed all He had come to do—"It is finished!"

"And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit." "And so, as a bird flies up out of a storm-shaken forest, and seeks more peaceful places, His spirit had lifted itself higher than battle, and above its stroke or sound."

The Sabbath and the great passover feast was close at hand. The Jews would not have the land defiled by dead bodies on their crosses, and asked Pilate to have the legs of all three broken that death might come speedily and the bodies be taken down. Pilate granted this request. The soldiers came and broke the legs of the two thieves, and finding that Jesus was already dead but wishing to make sure that He had not merely fainted, they thrust a spear into His side and blood and water flowed from the wound.

John adds his own testimony as a reliable eye-witness to the fact of Jesus' death, and notices in the manner of His death the fulfillment of two other prophecies.

Then came Joseph of Arimathæa, a secret follower of Jesus, and received from Pilate permission to remove the body. Had no one claimed it, it would have been cast into some pit. Nicodemus came also with a lavish gift of a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. Together they tenderly wrapped Jesus' body in the spices and linen cloths, the grave-bands, according to the Jewish method of preparation for burial. There was not time to go far before the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, and therefore they bore Jesus to a near-by garden and laid Him in a newly built tomb belonging to Joseph.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why was the crucifixion necessary?

2. The true cross of the Redeemer was the sin and sorrow of this world—that was what lay heavy on His heart—and that is the cross we shall share with Him, that is the cup we must drink of with Him, if we would have any part in the divine love which is one with His sorrow. *George Eliot.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. On what occasion was Peter rebuked for objecting to Jesus' declaration of His coming suffering and death and resurrection? (Mark 8. 31–33.) 2. What impression had been made on the chief priests by Jesus' words in regard to His resurrection? (Matt. 27. 62–66.) 3. How do you account for the fact that the disciples had not expected Jesus to rise from the dead? 4. Were they quick to believe in the report of His resurrection? (See Matt. 28. 17; Mark 16. 8–14; Luke 24. 11, 25, 37; John 20. 25, 27.) 5. What testimony to the resurrection of Jesus was borne by Peter in Acts 2. 24–32; 3. 15; 4. 10; 10. 40, and by Paul in Acts 13. 30–34; 17. 3, 18–31; 26. 23; 1 Cor. 1. 23; 15. 3, 4? 6. Who was Mary Magdalene? (Mark 16. 9.) 7. Look up these other references to her: Luke 8. 2; 23. 49, 55; 24. 1–10; John 19. 25.

LESSON IX — MAY 31

JESUS RISEN FROM THE DEAD

John 20.1–18. Commit verses 15, 16.

Golden Text

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Rev. 1.18.

LESSON TEXT John 20.1–18 TIME Sunday morning, April 9, A. D. 30

1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.
2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.
3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.
4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.
5 And he stooping down, *and looking in,* saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.
6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,
7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.
8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.
9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.
10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.
11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre,
12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.
13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.
14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.
15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.
16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.
17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God.
18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The first day.* R. V., *Now on the first day.* Sunday. *Cometh Mary Magda-*

lene. There were others with her, as the pronoun "we" in verse 2 indicates. See Matt. 28. 1; Mark 16. 1; Luke 24. 1, 10. Their purpose was to embalm the body. *Early.* As it began to dawn, Matt.; When the sun was risen, Mark; very early in the morning, Luke. *When.* R. V., *while. Sepulchre.* R. V., *tomb. The stone.* See Mark 15. 46 and Matt. 27. 66.

2. *Then she runneth.* R. V., *She runneth therefore.* While she hastened off, the others probably remained at the tomb and the events recorded in Matt. 28. 5–8, Mark 16. 5–8, and Luke 24. 4–10 took place. *The other disciple whom Jesus loved.* John. *Sepulchre.* R. V., *tomb.*

3. *That other.* R. V., *the other. And came to the sepulchre.* R. V., *and they went toward the tomb.*

4. *Did outrun.* R. V., *outran.* John was probably younger than Peter. *Sepulchre.* R. V., *tomb.*

5. *And he stooping.* R. V., *and stooping. Saw.* R. V., *he seeth. The linen-cloths.* John 19. 40. *Went.* R. V., *entered.* John was perhaps lost in wonder and reflection; perhaps withheld from entering by a feeling of reverence.

6. *Then cometh Simon Peter following him.* R. V., *Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him. Went into the sepulchre.* R. V., *entered into the tomb. Seeth the linen clothes lie.* R. V., *beholdeth the linen cloths lying.*

7. *The napkin.* See John 11. 44. *About.* R. V., *upon. Clothes.* R. V., *cloths. Wrapped together.* R. V., *rolled up.* All these details show that there was no haste when Jesus left the tomb. Had His body been carried off by others, the grave cloths would have been taken with it.

8. *Then went in also that other disciple.* R. V., *Then entered in therefore the other disciple also.* Therefore, because Peter had entered. *Which came first to the sepulchre.* R. V., *who came first to the tomb. Believed.* That Jesus was risen. See the next verse.

9. *The scripture.* See Psa. 61. 10. John here declares that till he saw proof of the fact, he had not realized that Jesus must rise from the dead. See Jesus' words to the disciples in Matt. 16. 21; Mark 8. 31; and Luke 9. 22, and compare the words of the chief priests in Matt. 27. 62–66.

10. *Then.* R. V., *So. Their own house.* Where they were staying in Jerusalem.

11. *Mary stood.* R. V., *Mary was standing.* She had followed the two disciples, and they had now left the tomb. *Sepulchre.* R. V., *tomb. And . . . she stooped down.* R. V., *So, . . . she stooped.*

12. *And seeth.* R. V., *and she beholdeth. Two angels.* One angel is mentioned in Matt. and Mark, and two in Luke. "Angels are not motionless and visible after the fashion of stone statues." *Godet. In white.* Supply "raiment"; the word "white" is an adjective in the Greek. *And the other.* R. V., *and one.*

14. *Saw.* R. V., *beholdeth. Knew not.* Mark (16. 12) speaks of his form as altered; her eyes, moreover, were dim with tears.

15. *The gardener.* The only one who would naturally be there at that hour. *Have borne.* R. V., *hast borne.*

16. *Jesus saith unto her, Mary.* "John's insight taught him first to conclude his Lord had risen; Mary's want brought her Lord first to her to satisfy it." *Luthardt. Saith unto Him.* R. V., *saith unto Him in Hebrew. Master.* R. V., *Teacher.*

17. *Unto her.* R. V., *to her. Touch me not.* R. V. margin, *Take not hold*

THE ANGEL AT THE TOMB—*Ender*

on me. For I am not yet ascended to my Father. R. V., *unto the Father.* He must not be detained, for only after His ascension was He to be with His followers permanently as He had promised (John 16. 7–20), and then in the Spirit, not in the body. This He promised again later. See Matt. 28. 20. *Go to.* R. V., *go unto. Say unto them.* R. V., *Say to them.*

18. R. V., *Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and that He had said these things unto her.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

9. *For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.* Although Jesus had been teaching His disciples with increasing clearness that He would rise from the dead, none of them had grasped the full meaning of His words. The company of Jesus had been so sweet to them, that they had refused to let their minds dwell upon His death; and the hints of death and of His resurrection were so vitally connected in the teaching of Jesus, that to ignore the one fact was to reject the other. When Jesus told Martha that her brother would rise again, Martha answered that she knew he would rise at the last day. So, doubtless, when Jesus spoke darkly of His own resurrection, the disciples would dream of some far distant resurrection. Long ages after Elijah had been carried heavenward, some of them had seen him on the Mount of Transfiguration. So it might be, that when the centuries had run, they would meet in glory the Lord they loved so well. They could believe for some far distant day. The day would come, no doubt, when Christ would rise. The incredible thing was that He was risen now. Are we not all tempted to an unbelief like that? Is it not easy to believe that God will work, but very hard to believe that God is working? Strong faith not only deals with the far past, and with the years that are hidden behind the veil. Strong faith is radiant for the present hour, and sees the hand of God at work to-day. *F. B. Meyer.*

17. *Jesus saith to her, Touch me not.* It might well be asked why Mary Magdalene should be told not to touch Christ because He had not ascended, whereas not only was Thomas bidden to touch Him (verse 27), but the Apostles were even bidden to "handle Him and see" that His body was not a mere apparition (Luke 24. 39.) The reason given to Mary for not "touching" Him would have applied just as strongly to the Apostles, whom He told to feel His living flesh (compare 1 John 1. 1).

The translation here ought to be as in the margin (R. V.) *Take not hold on Me,* or even better, *Cling not to me.* So rendered, it enables us to grasp the deep spiritual lesson which our Lord desired to impress on the mind of Mary, that this abode of His risen body on earth would now be but for a brief interspace of time, yet, even for that brief forty days, the time was passed for exhibitions of passionate human and bodily affection. *F. W. Farrar.*

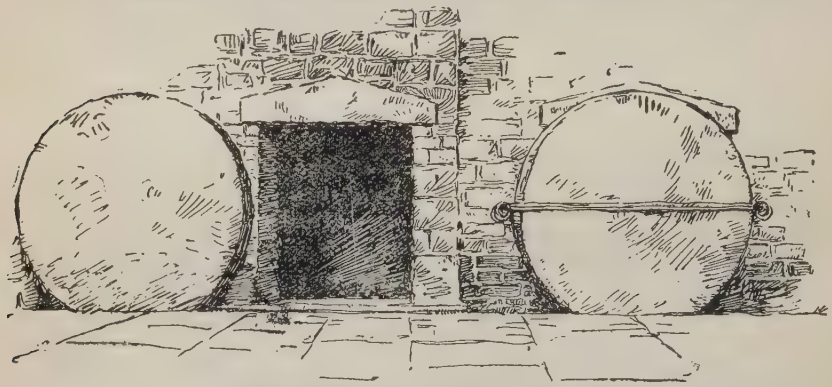
LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *On the first day of the week.* Our Saturday, the seventh day of the week, was the Jewish Sabbath. The other days the Jews distinguished only by their order, as first, second, etc. In their reckoning of time they counted a part of a day as an entire day. Jesus died on the cross on the afternoon of Friday,

and arose on Sunday morning, thus lying in the tomb three days according to their way of counting time.

1. *Now cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb.* The simple Moravians of the wooded hillsides of Saxony keep still, at Herrnhut, their "watch of the Lord" with the earliest break of the Easter dawn, and sing, as in anticipation of the last and brightest Easter day, their sweet Easter hymns across the quiet graves of their friends awaiting, in "God's acre," the great Resurrection summons. *Thomas A. Guerney.*

1. *The stone taken away.* The door of the tomb might be rectangular and of solid stone, with a flange fitting into a socket for a hinge, both of the same material; or it might be a cylindrical stone rolling in a groove to the right or left of the opening; or there might be a regular door of stone supported by



Tomb Open and Closed by a Stone

hinges against which a stone was rolled for further protection. It is not possible to say with certainty which of these methods was followed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa. The sealing of tombs appears to have been common throughout the East. Quite recently they have been found in Egypt, dating back to the time of the Exodus, with their seals still intact upon them. *Bissell.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is at the tomb where the body of Jesus had been laid, and also in Jerusalem where Mary told the good news of His resurrection to the disciples.

There are no events recorded in John between the last lesson and this. It is important to recall, however, that a stone was rolled against the door of the tomb and that at the request of the chief-priests and Pharisees Pilate sent a guard to seal the stone and watch. "We remember," said the Pharisees to Pilate, "that that deceiver said while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again;' command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply His disciples come and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; and the last error will be worse than the first." "Go, make it as sure as ye can," returned Pilate. See Matt. 27. 60–66.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Has any special good fortune happened to you or

any of your friends this year that has made you very happy? Was it an unexpected good fortune, something that seemed so wonderfully good that you said it was "too good to be true"? Do you know what it means to hear some good news that comes with so great a surprise that you actually wonder whether it be so, and begin to fear that you may wake up and find it only a dream? Such wondrously joyful news came to Mary Magdalene one Sunday morning. With a heart burdened with deepest sorrow she had gone early that morning to visit a tomb. Whose tomb was it?

For Older Pupils. After all seems over, after Jesus has lived His wonderful life for a few years in Palestine and has been rejected by His own, has been put to a shameful death, and buried in a tomb, and His sorrowing disciples are stricken with the horror and hopelessness of their grief, John gives his epilogue of the resurrection, in which he bears his own testimony as an eye witness of his risen Lord. "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true."

The appearances of Jesus after His resurrection are centered in John's Gospel around four events; his own discovery of the empty tomb and Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene; Jesus' appearance to the disciples in the absence of Thomas; to Thomas together with the other disciples; and to the disciples and especially Simon Peter by the Lake of Galilee.

One of these disciples was exiled and the others all suffered violent deaths because of their persistent proclaiming of their faith in the crucified and risen Saviour. And yet there have been those who have accused these men of fraud, of wilfully inventing the story of Jesus' resurrection!

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I am He that Liveth, and was Dead

The Arguments against the Resurrection. From the first Easter Day till now there have been those who have denied the reality of Christ's resurrection. Some have claimed that the disciples were deceivers; others that they were self-deceived. The Jews during the life of the Apostles asserted that the Apostles came and stole away the body of Jesus while the Roman guard slept. This was the explanation of the claim of the Apostles made during the early years of Christianity. Celsus, a philosopher of the second century who wrote *A True Discourse,* an attack against the Christians; Porphyry, of the third, one of the most learned of the antagonists of the Christians; and Julian the Apostate of the fourth, the Roman emperor who is especially celebrated for his attempt to dethrone Christianity and restore paganism in the Roman Empire, all asserted that the Apostles stole the body of Jesus and then spread abroad the report that He had risen. "The sepulchre is sealed, and a guard is set, with instructions to keep watch until the third day. They are Roman soldiers, and they all sleep at the critical moment. The timid Apostles form a design to steal the body, they surprise the soldiers — the guard still sleeps — they roll away the heavy stone from the entrance to the tomb — the guard still sleeps — they remove the body — and the guard sleeps on. The sleeping guards testify that the Apostles stole the body while they slept, and thus the denial of the resurrection rests upon the testimony of men who swear that they were asleep when the event that they swear to transpired. If the Jews believed this, if the

Romans believed this, why were not the Apostles punished for defying the power of Rome? What foolishness, united with temerity unheard of, for the Apostles, who fled when Jesus lived, to steal a dead body and proclaim a falsehood in the teeth of their enemies!" It is neither possible to conceive of men who preached and practiced every virtue deliberately manufacturing the accounts they gave of Christ's appearances after His crucifixion, nor of their willingly suffering for the sake of what they knew to be false, such persecutions and deaths as were theirs.

The argument that the disciples were self-deceived seems to have been a later hypothesis, one not used during the lifetime of the witnesses themselves. It is said that they saw what they wanted to see, as people overwrought often seem to do — these men and women who had not understood Christ's references to His resurrection, who had no thought of ever seeing Him alive again, who were so loth themselves to believe that the Risen Christ was the Crucified Christ!

The visionary hypothesis has a large number of believers — the theory that the excited witnesses saw certain visionary appearances after the crucifixion, and imagined that they saw Christ Himself. Had there been only one or two witnesses, this might be credible, but ten appearances of the risen Lord are recorded, not only to individuals separately, but to all the Apostles and other disciples with them, and to five hundred together at one time. So many could not have been mentally deranged so that their senses were untrustworthy. The disciples were neither deceived nor deceivers.

Christianity a Proof of the Resurrection. At the cross the disciples were frightened, and scattered. By the way of the resurrection these were gathered, and held in patient waiting, until the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, whose coming created the new society, which consisted not merely in the gathering together of individuals but their fusing into one mystic unity. Then followed the growth and influence of that Church in every successive century. Within its border to-day there is the deposit of the only regenerative Gospel that man has ever heard. The resurrection of Christ is proven to-day by the Church on earth, with its ordinances, its living ministry, its Gospel of grace, and the marvellous victories won in every age, and in every land by its toil, in spite of its weakness and its worldliness. The Church of Christ is the supreme credential of Christ. *G. Campbell Morgan, The Crises of the Christ.*

II Because He lives we shall live also

Death's Conqueror. There was once a famous cape reputed to be the fatal barrier to the navigation of the ocean. Of all those whom the wind or the current had drawn into its waters, it was said that none had reappeared. A bold navigator determined to surmount the obstacle. He opened the route to the East Indies, acquired for his country the riches of the world, and changed the "Cape of Storms" into the "Cape of Good Hope." So Christ has proved Himself death's Conqueror, and made the grave to be the gate of life for us. *The Christian Age.*

We shall live also. We know that the Son of God lived and died and arose from the dead and showed Himself to His disciples. We know that the spirit world is real. "One evening you find among the reeds of your lake an unknown bird, whose broad breast and powerful pinions are not meant for this inland ocean," says Dr. John Watson. "It is resting midway between

two oceans, and by to-morrow will have gone. Does not that bird prove the ocean it left, does it not prove the ocean whither it has flown? 'Jesus, knowing that He was come from God and went to God' is the Revelation and Confirmation of the Ageless Life."

"Blessed is he who at that last hour goes willingly because he knows that he goes after his Lord;" says Dr. Maclaren, "recognizing that the grave, too, is a 'place whither the Forerunner for us is entered,' and hears as he passes into the gloom that Jesus lights up: 'He that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but — even there — 'shall have the light of life.'"

III If, then, ye were raised together with Christ, seek the Things that are above

Stretching forward to the Things which are before. If, then, ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory. The Apostle reminds us by these words in his Epistle to the Colossians that this life with Christ is given us not alone as a privilege but also as an obligation. It may be ours; it shall be ours only if we ourselves will to have it ours. That the risen life with Christ is ours here and now is proved by our "forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, pressing on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Our life should be loyal to Christ, should be lived as nearly as possible as He lived; and it should be an expectant, joyful life, for that mind set on the things that are above can say with Epictetus, "What matters anything that can happen to me, if my soul is above it?"

We believe that Christ is risen, we believe that because He lives we shall live also, and believing these things we have a new ambition in life, an ambition to seek the things that are above, to care more about the character that we shall take with us into that future life that shall be endless than about the events that happen to us in this brief life that is ours here and now. We need to learn how to live, and to have in mind the purpose for which we are living. "For me to live is Christ," said Paul. Youth is only a passing phase of existence; maturity, old age, are other phases through which each one passes who lives long; the real life is the life to come. The great problem before each one is how to live here so as to live there. "There is only one way to get ready for immortality, and that is to love this life, and live it as bravely and cheerfully and faithfully as we can."

What we take into the Life to come. We do not know, scientifically, but so far as there is any trustworthy knowledge outside of the scientifically demonstrable, we know that physical death does not end all. Look at this fallen leaf. It lies there, devoid of every manifestation of life, apparently extinct. But we know — and this is scientifically demonstrable knowledge — that the life principle in it has not come up against the dead-wall of annihilation. It will pass on, through assimilation and transformation of chemical substances in the leaf, into other and kindred forms of equal vigor and beauty.

"Yes," you say, "but this kind of immortality is not enough to satisfy the

spirit of man. What it yearns for is conscious survival, the perpetuation of personality, individuality, memory." Well, I answer, what is there in the transition of the dead leaf that forbids such a hope? Each living thing passes on to the next stage of life what it has to pass on. The leaf has no conscious personality; it can pass on nothing of that sort. But it has a physical hold upon life; it has the kind of immortality, or continuity, that belongs to chemically imperishable elements. All that it has it is capable of projecting into the life that is to come.

Here is a human being in like process of transition. All that this being has it is capable of projecting into the new life. Will it have some sort of physical continuity? Yes, because there are chemical substances in the body that are indestructible. Can it pass on its inner, spiritual life, its personal consciousness, reason, individuality, memory? Yes, a thousand times yes! For these things are the things most essential to it, the things that differentiate human life from the lower orders of life. Shall not a human being pass on through the great transition what is most essential to it? When we die, shall the great and noble and godlike part of us go down to annihilation, and only the part of us that is lower in the evolutionary scale survive? Is it just, is it reasonable, is it reverent, to ascribe such logic, such incompetency of method, to the Creator of the universe and the Judge of all the earth?

Life goes on, the life of the leaf and the life of the man. The life of the leaf goes on leaf-wise; the life of the man goes on man-wise. It is the godlike in man, the soul, the character, the personality, that passes on most assuredly and most vitally into the life that is to come. *James Buchanan,* in *Zion's Herald.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

They who follow the risen Lord will live the risen life. *Ram's Horn.*

The infidel lives in the day and looks forward to darkness; the Christian lives in the night and looks forward to the day. *Moody.*

What to you are the memorial songs of resurrection if thine own spirit be dead? *George Matheson.*

I thank Thee, O Father, that there is a voice within me which contradicts the silence of death. *George Matheson.*

One thing is certain: this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished and there is a life eternal. *Harnack.*

Christianity founded upon a myth would be ten thousand times more wonderful than Christianity founded upon a Christ who rose from the dead. *C. C. Hall.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep. 1 Cor. 15. 20.

Our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. 2 Tim. 1. 10.

Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. Acts 2. 24.

God hath raised the Lord, and will raise us up through his power. 1 Cor. 6. 14.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to

His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

After Jesus' death and resurrection He appeared to many people, even to five hundred at one time, but in each case He manifested Himself only to those who loved Him and longed to see Him. He did not appear to Pilate or Caiaphas or the Sanhedrin or the rabble of Jerusalem. So it is now; He does not manifest Himself to those who neglect Him or are indifferent to Him.

When Jesus first spoke to Mary Magdalene she thought He was the gardener. Often we fail to receive divine messages because we do not recognize in the messenger the one sent.

"Earth's crammed with Heaven,
Every common bush afire with God,"

and Heaven's messages may come from commonplace messengers and in commonplace events.

Let us solemnly ask ourselves the question Browning asks in *Christmas Eve and Easter Day:*

One thing
Remained, however,—one that tasked
My soul to answer; and I asked
Fairly and frankly, what might be
That History, that Faith, to Me?

Has my belief in the risen Lord affected my life? Has my faith that because He lives we shall live also borne fruit in the kind of life I am now living? Or do I live as though this life ended all, as though there were no connection between this present life and the life to come, as though I had no certainty that my character here determines my destiny hereafter?

Death is coming to each one of us and we dread it. And yet Jesus has removed the terror of the grave. He has declared that He is the Resurrection and the Life, and because He lives, we shall live also. If we believe this, ought we not rather to live well the life that may be given us here to live and look forward happily to that future life to which we are going?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

When the resurrection morning dawned the friends of the Lord went to His tomb and He was not there. No one had seen Him leave the tomb, and therefore no attempt was made by the Evangelists to depict the scene. John tells us of the arrival at the tomb, early on the first day of the week, of Mary Magdalene, the "last at the cross and earliest at the grave." She found that the stone, which had been placed at the entrance to the tomb and sealed, was rolled away, and greatly excited she hastened to find the disciples. Meeting Peter and John she told them that the Lord had been taken from the tomb and no one knew where He had been laid. The two disciples ran to the tomb. John reached there first and reverently and wonderingly looking in where the Saviour's body had rested he beheld only the linen cloths with which it had been wrapped. Then the impetuous Peter rushed into the tomb and saw a wonderful thing.

The linen cloths were rolled up and the napkin which had been upon the Saviour's head was in another place; orderly and leisurely had been Christ's departure from His place of imprisonment. John followed Peter's example, and he saw and believed that Christ had risen from the dead, and he bore record that till this time the disciples had not believed that He must rise again from the dead. So different had been their own conception of Christ's Kingdom, and so full were their thoughts of what they expected it to be, that they had not grasped the meaning of Scripture or of Christ's own words to them, and the truth of His resurrection had never dawned upon them till they saw its proof.

After the two disciples left the tomb Mary Magdalene returned and stood there weeping. Then she, too, stooped and looked in, and heavenly visitors met her gaze; two angels in white raiment were standing there, one at the head and one at the foot where Christ's body had lain. "Why weepest thou?" they ask her. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him," she returned. Then she heard another voice saying, "Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" Turning only partly around she thought she saw the gardener of the place, and she besought him to tell her where he had removed the body of her Lord. "Mary," was the only word that Christ then uttered, for it was no other than He Himself who stood there; the familiar tone aroused her senses that had been benumbed with grief. With one joyful exclamation—"Rabboni"—she sprang forward as if to embrace His feet and hold Him forever there, but Christ withheld her. "Cling not to me, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father," He said. The old, familiar fellowship was not to be renewed, only after His ascension would a new and spiritual communion be established between Him and His followers. "But go unto My brethren," He told her, "and say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." An eager messenger to the disciples was Mary with her glad tidings of great joy.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The proof of Christ's resurrection. There is no historical fact proved by better and fuller evidence.

2. The miracle of Christ's resurrection, attested by such strong evidence, a proof that other miracles were a part of God's revelation of His power.

3. The lasting effect of wrong teaching and early prejudice shown in the ability of the disciples to apprehend their Lord's plain teaching in regard to His death and resurrection.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Compare the account of Christ's appearance to the disciples in Mark 16. 14–18 and Luke 24. 36–43. 2. What had Peter done which might arouse the Jews' anger? (John 18. 8–10.) 3. When had Christ promised the disciples the authority conferred in verse 23? (Matt. 16. 19; 18. 18.) 4. What do the words mean? 5. What do you know about Thomas? (See Subject Index of the Bible.) 6. Whose testimony did Thomas refuse to accept? (John 21. 1–25.) 7. Why did he demand the special kind of proof recorded in verse 25? 8. What is the meaning of Christ's words in verse 29? 9. What do verses 30 and 31 indicate?

LESSON X—JUNE 7

JESUS APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES

John 20.19–31. Commit verses 19, 20.

Golden Text

Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God. John 20. 28.

LESSON TEXT John 20. 19–31 TIME Sunday evenings, April 9 and 16, A. D. 30

19 Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.
20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.
21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.
22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them,* and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:
23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.
24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.
25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.
26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.
27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.
28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.
29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.
30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:
31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

19. *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week.* R. V., *When therefore it was evening, on that day the first day of the week. The disciples.* Luke 24. 33 records the presence also of others. *Were assembled.* R. V., *were. Peace be unto you.* The customary form of salutation.

20. *So said.* R. V., *said this. He showed. . . . side.* To convince them of His identity; His Spirit was still clothed with the same body that was His

before His death, although it was now no longer subject to ordinary laws, as is shown by His entering when the doors were shut. *Then were His disciples glad.* R. V., *the disciples therefore were glad.*

21. *Then said Jesus.* R. V., *Jesus therefore said. Peace be unto you.* Perhaps a repetition of His greeting, or it may be that after some unrecorded words He was about to leave them with these words of farewell. *My Father.* R. V., *The Father.*

22. *He breathed on them.* "This was meant to convey the impression that His own very Spirit was imparted to them." *Dods. Holy Ghost.* R. V., *Holy Spirit.* The word translated *Ghost* or *Spirit* means literally *breath.* Compare Luke 24. 49. The gift was given in greater measure at Pentecost.

23. *Remit.* R. V., *fogive. Remitted.* R. V., *forgiven.* Compare Matt. 16. 19; 18. 18.

24. *Didymus.* That is, *Twin,* R. V. margin.

25. *Thrust.* R. V., *put.*

26. *After eight days.* The Sunday following His resurrection. *Then came Jesus.* R. V., *Jesus cometh.*

27. *Behold.* R. V., *see. Thrust.* R. V., *put. Faithless.* Without faith; the word in Greek is ἄπιστος (unbelieving), while the word for believing is πιστός.

28. *And Thomas.* R. V., *Thomas.*

29. *Seen me.* Perhaps we may infer from this verb that Thomas did not make use of the privilege offered him by Jesus of touching His hands and side.

30. *And many other signs truly.* R. V., *Many other signs therefore. Signs.* Miracles, works. See John 2. 11. *His disciples.* R. V., *the disciples. This book.* Verses 30 and 31 seem to be the conclusion of the Gospel, and chapter 21 a postscript.

31. *These.* All those recorded in this Gospel. *That ye may . . . name.* The great object John has had in mind in writing his Gospel. *Ye might have life through His name.* R. V., *ye may have life in His name.* Eternal life.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

22. *He breathed on them.* Inspiration is inbreathing. It is an uplifting influence of one spirit on another spirit. A congregation listens to an inspiring address, an audience to inspiring music. We are inspired by reading the records of past heroism. Emotions, thoughts, feelings, pass from mind to mind. One soul breathes life into another soul; God breathes His life into us all. This is inspiration; the elevating or clarifying influence which one spirit may have upon another spirit. Belief in divine inspiration is belief that God's Spirit has such an influence on human spirits. *Lyman Abbott, Revelation and Inspiration.*

23. *Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them, whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* The great charter which followed the gift, the power of forgiving or retaining sin, must be understood in consonance with the preceding commission and endowment. Christians are "sent" to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus as the destroyer of sin. The sins of those who receive it are remitted, and those of its rejectors are bound more tightly on them. The messengers, therefore, do forgive and retain by the preaching of the Word, and they have the right to tell a man that his sins are forgiven when they hear him profess his faith in the Great Remitter. We have here

to do with no mysterious priestly power of absolution, but with the blessed or awful consequences of the acceptance or rejection of the offer of salvation in Jesus. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *S. S. Times.*

25. *I will not believe.* If you want to find the true analogy to this despair of Thomas, visit some home where "in the shadow of a great affliction, a soul sits dumb." Sorrow has the power for a time of separating men from God, of making faith falter, of bringing the horror of a great darkness into their sky. I have seen others in the very same plight as Thomas — unable to believe, unable to realize, that Jesus was alive. I have received letters such as Thomas might have written on any one of the ten days after the Passion. "I can see no gleam of light, and have lost my hold on God," writes one out of the midst of a crushing grief. And that was exactly the case with Thomas. "Much learning hath made thee mad," said Sextus to Paul. And much grief had made Thomas a doubter, had made him lose his hold on God. *J. D. Jones, The Glorious Company of the Apostles.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

22. *He breathed on them.* The impartation of vital energy and of spiritual power by the breath is a belief always very widely held throughout the East. The dervish mystics at the present day blow upon their neophytes during the ceremony of initiation into the mysteries of their order. They believe that the spirit of their venerable master is thus imparted to those who receive his precepts and promise obedience to his commands. Also, in their prayers over the sick, the patient is at certain intervals ceremoniously breathed upon, in order, as they say, that the vital energy or spiritual power of the operator may be thus imparted to the sufferer. The origin of this oriental custom is lost.

If the question be asked whether this act of the Master in breathing upon His disciples had any connection with this existing custom, it may be remarked that our Lord frequently in His miracles made use of human instrumentalities and conformed to human customs, and made use of human figures of speech, and so in this act He may naturally have used this method as being impressively solemn and readily understood. It was nothing new or strange to the disciples, and excited in them no feeling of surprise. *Albert L. Long,* in *S. S. Times.*

29. *They that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Men were lighted as torches in Nero's garden, and women flung to the wild beasts of the amphitheatre; and for what? For a system, for a cause, for a church? They died for Him "Whom having not seen ye love," and the name of the Crucified was the last word that trembled on their dying lips. "Men," says Leckie, "seemed indeed to be in love with death. Believing they were the wheat of God, they panted for the day when they should be ground by the teeth of wild beasts into the pure bread of Christ." Love of life and love of kin, fear of pain and fear of death, were powerless before this talisman "For My sake." This sublime passion did not die with the sacrifice of the martyrs, a mere hysteric of Religion, for it has continued unto this day the hidden spring of all sacrifice and beauty in the Christian life. *John Watson,* in *The Expositor.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Between the last lesson and this there are no events recorded in John. Mat-

thew (28. 9–15) records Jesus' second appearance to the other women and the report of the guard, and Mark (16. 12, 13) and Luke (24. 13–35) record His third appearance to Peter and His fourth to the disciples on their way to Emmaus.

On both occasions narrated in this lesson the disciples were assembled in some house in Jerusalem.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In the Garden of Gethsemane, you remember, Jesus was arrested and led away for hasty trials before the Jewish and the Roman authorities. What became of the disciples at this time? "They all forsook Him and fled." It is now Sunday evening three days later. What has happened to Jesus meanwhile? What to Peter? To John? Have we any record of the other disciples during these three days? What do you suppose they have been thinking about? Ten of the apostles are assembled in their usual place of meeting in Jerusalem. What has become of Judas? What other disciple is not with them? Other followers are there also; among them are probably Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa. All are listening eagerly to marvelous accounts. What has Mary Magdalene had to tell them? What is the report of John? Peter has seen the risen Lord. Cleopas and another disciple have been joined by Jesus as they were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They knew Him not at first, though they said afterwards that their hearts "burned within them" as He talked with them. But when they sat down together to eat, "their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and then He vanished out of their sight." As the disciples listen with breathless interest to these accounts, they were filled with amazement and doubt and hope. Suddenly a marvelous thing happens. What is it?

For Older Pupils. Says one of our great writers: "The highway to earnest belief is earnest doubting. A question-mark is simply evidence that a man is beginning to think. Take the doubts which education has given you, and face them. Seek to resolve them. The only skepticism that the pulpit has a right to condemn is the skepticism of Pilate, who says, with a shrug of his shoulders, 'What is truth?' and goes out without waiting for an answer. . . . We ought to be more devout because of Robert Ingersoll. Not because he is an educator in devotion, but because the shaken faith should be stronger than the unshaken, and we should have our roots so laying hold of God Almighty that blasts of tempestuous doubt shall only make them take a stronger hold." "Bygone doubts are available for the furtherance of faith"; says another writer, "for the perturbations of faith are converted into confirmations, just as the perturbations in the planetary motions, at first supposed to throw doubt on Newton's theory of gravitation, were converted by more searching inquiry into the strongest proof of its truth."

Certainly the faith of the world has been strengthened by the doubt of Thomas; his very character gives great force to his satisfied doubt and final testimony. Peter was impulsive and quick to jump at conclusions; John was ruled by his love. Thomas was brave and honest and earnest, and at the same time cautious, suspicious, and despondent. He had lost all hope. If such a man can be convinced, any one can be. Thomas was resolved that he would trust to no one's testimony. Truthful as he knew the other Apostles and the women

were, he would believe only when he himself saw and felt and heard. The others might have had a dream or seen a vision, or some one might have been impersonating his Master, he doubtless thought; only one proof should be conclusive to him, and that his own.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Doubts

What to do with Doubts. Man is finite and God is infinite; and finite man must be content not to understand Infinite God. Intellectual difficulties there always will be in the way of understanding many religious truths; difficulties that are insoluble. All our doubts do not need to be resolved.

Some doubts there are which need not trouble one because they will resolve themselves. "If I could only believe what you believe, I should very soon be a better man," some one said to Pascal, and the latter wisely replied, "Begin by being a better man, and you will very soon believe what I believe." Put the doubts out of mind and live as though they did not exist for you. "Seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness" was Christ's command; whoever honestly and earnestly obeys, will find that his doubts trouble him no more. You can not know Christ's life without learning that He is worthy of confidence; and you can not put your trust in Him and serve Him without learning that He is your Lord and your God.

Some doubts there are which trouble one in the earlier part of his Christian career and disappear as he grows in spiritual power and insight. To such doubts the counsel of Horace Bushnell aptly applies; "Often the very best thing you can do with your doubts is to hang them up to dry. Then, when a good time comes, you can take them down to look at. In many cases you will find that somehow they have settled themselves; they are no longer doubts." Practice and experience of religious truths must precede theorizing about religious truths.

Do not make the mistake of confounding doubt in regard to doctrine with doubt in regard to religious truth. Do not confound doubt with unbelief. Doubt is an unsettled thing; unbelief is a settled thing. Doubt cherished and cultivated may lead to unbelief.

If one's own light disappears utterly in the fog of doubt, it is a good thing to steer by others' lights. A forceful writer has said that for a time he doubted everything except that there is a God, and then he steered his life as the steamers steer their way in the New York harbor during a fog, not by any light of his own, but by bells and signals he heard from other lives.

Forget Doubts in Service for Others. A young theological student was beset with doubts, one long-cherished conviction after another disappeared, and illness followed his severe mental struggle. He went into the country to regain his health, taking with him a trunkful of books which he intended to study in the hope that he might regain his hold on the spiritual verities. There was a forlorn little church in the neighborhood without a pastor. He was asked to teach a class in the Sunday-school and could not refuse. Then the people besought him to preach for them. What could he preach, he who had so many doubts, and yet how could he refuse? He yielded to their importunities, and soon found himself thinking, "If the Gospel is not true, it ought to be true, for

it is what all need." The boys needed his guiding hand, the aged looked forward to his calls, the sick required his ministrations, and the bereaved his words of comfort and hope. He forgot himself and his doubts. He labored earnestly for the little community, and when he left in the fall his books had not been opened, but his doubts had disappeared, and he could say with Paul: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

II Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed

The Meaning of Christ's Rebuke. There are three things which Christ did not mean by his words to Thomas. He did not object to Thomas' desire to see and feel what could be seen and felt as proofs of His identity. He did not object to Thomas' desiring to prove His identity beyond all possibility of mistake. He did not wish Thomas to suppose that one who believes on slender grounds is more blessed than one who believes on convincing evidence.

What, then, does Christ mean by His "Beatitude to All Generations"? He means that he who has not seen and yet has believed rests his faith on higher evidence than he who believes because he has seen. John was at once convinced by the evidence of his soul; Thomas first required the evidence of his sense. The beloved disciple looked into the empty tomb and believed Christ's resurrection. He needed no other evidence, for his knowledge of his Master's life and his experience of his Master's power made the resurrection easily believable. "There is an inward state of heart which makes truth credible the moment it is stated," declares Dr. F. W. Robertson. "It is credible to some men because of what they are. Love is credible to a loving heart; purity is credible to a pure mind. Of course that inward state could not reveal a fact like the resurrection; but it can receive the fact the moment it is revealed without requiring evidence. The love of John himself never could discover a resurrection; but it made a resurrection easily believed, when the man of intellect, Thomas, found difficulties. Therefore 'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' and therefore 'he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' Now it is of such a state, a state of love and hope, which makes the divine truths credible and natural at once, that Jesus speaks: 'Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.'"

The Things not seen are Greater than the Things seen. Thomas was willing to believe; more than this, he was anxious to believe, but he wanted visible, tangible proof; he wanted evidence of his own, not that of others. We must sympathize with him in this, for who has not felt that if he could have seen Christ as His disciples saw Him, could have heard His voice as they heard it, and experienced the power of His life as they experienced it, then believing in Him would be far easier than it is to us who live so many centuries later than He lived on earth. This Beatitude of Jesus should convince us that the disciples' privilege of sight alone could not lead them to as blessed a trust in Jesus as our privilege of faith. It was sight which led Thomas to believe the risen Jesus was the Jesus who had tabernacled among them, but it was soul which led him to believe that the risen Jesus was divine. Not faith in things seen, but faith in things unseen, made him exclaim, "My Lord and my

God." The Jesus whom he had loved was now the Christ whom he worshipped.

He who believes only in what his eyes can see has a very small amount of belief in anything. Without faith in the dawning of another day, who would go peacefully to sleep at night? Without faith in his fellowmen, who would engage in any kind of business? Without faith in a future life, who would not "eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die"? If the things of this life must be grasped by faith, shall we demand that the things of the life to come be grasped in any other way?

Things not seen are greater than things seen; spiritual sight is greater than physical sight; the one is real and lasting, the other passes away. This the Apostle Paul has clearly expressed in these words: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

What "Believing" means. We shall very poorly understand either this saying or this Gospel, or the greater part of the New Testament, if we do not make it very clear to our minds that "believing" is not credence only, but trust. The object of the Christian's faith is not a proposition; it is not a dogma nor a truth, but a Person. And the act of faith is not an acceptance of a certain thing, a resurrection or anything else, as true, but it is a reaching out of the whole nature to Him and a resting upon Him. *Alexander Maclaren.*

III As the Father hath sent Me, even so I send you

The Life of Jesus was a Life of Service. Early in Jesus' ministry He came to Nazareth and went into the synagogue as was His custom, and when He was asked to read from the prophet Isaiah, He read this selection: —

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach tidings to the poor;
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

And He closed the book and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears."

On the last day of His life with His disciples Jesus washed their feet, and at the close of this lowly service He said to them: "I have given you an example that ye also should do as I have done to you. . . . If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." The life of Jesus was a life of service. He came to do the will of God, His Father, in loving service for mankind, His brothers. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give His life a ransom for many," He said: and again, "I am in the midst of you as He that serveth."

The Lives of His Disciples should resemble their Teacher's. A fundamental thought of Jesus' teaching is that God is our Father, and He is the Example of the life that we should lead as children of our Father. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another," He declared, and over and over again He taught that love means service. He found His disciples disputing which of them should be the greatest, and He told them that through the path of service the way to greatness lay; "He that is the

greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." A life of service is the only Christ-like life. No one rightly follows Jesus who does not do Jesus' work in Jesus' way. Only they are His followers who are learning from Him the art of right living.

Our Commission. "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." These words were spoken by Jesus not only to the eleven disciples, but also to "them that were with them," as Luke tells us. He commissioned them, and us, to carry on the work of the Father. It is a great thing to have a commission, to realize that we are in God's service, that we are co-workers with Him. Our time, our means, our talents, our opportunities, our influence, our life itself are entrusted to us for His service. General Gordon was one of God's great co-workers. The inscription on his tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral closes with these words: "Who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering and his heart to God."

There is no one so helpless himself that he can not help others. The life of Sophie Wright of New Orleans is full of inspiration. Crippled by an accident in childhood, Miss Wright has all her life been a sufferer, yet to her *The Picayune* awarded its prize as the one who had done more than any one else for the city of New Orleans. Her family lost their property in the Civil War, and on the death of her father she began to support herself and her mother when only fourteen years old. She had then a grammar school education, and she opened a school for younger girls. Frail as she was, she taught this school in the morning, attended a normal school in the afternoon where she taught the beginners for her tuition, and gave instruction in the evening to a young man who was too poor to pay her anything. Her free evening school has grown to seventeen hundred scholars. She has built a cottage for crippled children. Every one who came to her she has helped, and the poor of the city, the factory and foundry boys and young men, the boot-blacks and street Arabs, all know and love her. At the time the prize was awarded her, "her boys" raised ten thousand dollars to pay off the mortgage on her school building, for during all these years she has helped so many thousands and has remained poor herself. As. Dr. W. H. P. Faunce has expressed it, "We have come to see that the invalid in the sick chamber may render greater service than the stout mechanic; that not the bread-winner, but the love-awakener is most needed in our strenuous civilization."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Faith is the heroism of intellect. *C. H. Parkhurst.*

Doubt indulged soon becomes doubt realized. *F. R. Havergal.*

Faith is the sacrifice of the understanding to God. *Jeremy Taylor.*

It is not belief about the Christ, but personal trust in the Christ of God, that saves the soul. *F. W. Robertson.*

The coat of arms of this age is an interrogation point, and its motto is Query. *Henry van Dyke.*

If 'mid the gathering storms of doubt
Our hearts grow faint and cold,
The strength we can not live without,
Thy love will not withhold. *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

To believe, not because we have learned and can prove, but because there is

something in us, even God's own Spirit, which makes us feel light as light and truth as truth, — this is the blessed faith. *F. W. Robertson.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 1 Thess. 5. 21.

We walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. 5. 7.

He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. 1 John 4. 20.

All things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation. . . . We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ. 2 Cor. 5. 18, 20.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Christ is still saying to us, "Handle me and see." In the place of that form which Thomas saw, stand for us the records of those who lived with Christ on earth. Do we fail to doubt these records merely because we do not think enough about them to have any doubts? Do we believe them because we have handled them and seen that they are true?

Moses is said to have "endured as seeing Him who is invisible," and he was known as "the Friend of God." I, too, may be such a friend of God.

Have I mistaken my acceptance of certain statements concerning Christ for a belief in Him? I accept the fact that Lazarus rose from the dead at Christ's command, but that acceptance has no effect on my life. Thomas accepted the fact of Christ's resurrection and then advanced to a trust in Him as his Saviour and Lord which ever afterward influenced his life. Believing in Christ involves the mind and the heart and the conduct. Has my mind accepted Christ, is my heart enlisted in His cause, does my conduct show that I believe in Him?

Christ's commission to the Apostles and the other disciples with them is His commission to us also. Every true follower of His is "one sent." The Apostles were not only sent, but they were given the power to accomplish their mission. I will look for my mission in whatever service it is within my power to render others, and, more than this, I will not refuse a service that is brought to my notice by others, because I think I can not do it, but will ask God to empower me for that service.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

After appearing to individual disciples through the day, Christ suddenly appeared at evening in the midst of the disciples and others as they were assembled in a room in Jerusalem. When they beheld Him standing among them, despite the fact that they had closed the doors for fear of the Jews, they were terrified, Luke tells us, thinking they were gazing at a spirit. "Peace be unto you," were Christ's words of greeting, and He reassured them by showing them His hands through which the nails had been driven to fasten Him to the cross, and His side which the soldier's spear had pierced. The conviction that He was indeed the Lord filled them with joy. Again He said, "Peace be unto you," and bade them continue His work. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you," were His words, and then came the bestowment of power to carry out His com-

mission in the breathing upon them and the exhortation to receive the Holy Spirit. In presenting Him to the world they would judge the world, for the receiving or rejecting of Him would bring with it its own judgment. Those who rightly received Him they had the authority to declare forgiven, and the sins of those who rejected Him they could declare retained, unforgiven. Thomas, gloomy and despondent, had been absent from this meeting. When the others told him the glad news that they had seen the Lord he would not believe their testimony. They might have been deceived, and he will believe only his own senses. Nothing less than putting his own hands into the print of the nails in the hands and into the pierced side of the risen Lord could convince him of Christ's resurrection, he declared.

A week later the disciples were assembled at the same place, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut as before, and again Christ appeared in their midst and said, "Peace be unto you." Then turning to Thomas He bade him touch His hands and His side, thus making known to him that He was aware of his lack of faith in the other disciples' testimony. "Be not faithless, but believing." No longer could Thomas doubt. "My Lord and my God," he exclaimed, as his physical sight convinced him of the identity of his risen Lord, and his spiritual sight enabled him to grasp the truth of his Lord's divinity. "Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed," said Christ to him, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." The evidence of soul is higher than the evidence of sense.

The acknowledgment of Thomas was the climax of the faith in Jesus, whose portrayal has been the great theme of John's Gospel. Much of Christ's life he has not recorded, John adds in closing, but what he has recorded has been written for the purpose of proving that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that those who believe may have life in His name.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The evidence of Christ's resurrection is sufficient to convince any honest doubter.

2. Those doubts that have been raised in this questioning age about the Bible which are thoughtful and reverent will, like the sincere doubt of Thomas, eventually lead to a securer faith in the Bible truths.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the 21st chapter of John. 2. Who were the disciples that went fishing? (Verse 2.) 3. Who were the sons of Zebedee? 4. Tell the story of the miraculous draught of fishes at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. (Luke 5. 1–11.) 5. What were the two other occasions on which Jesus manifested Himself to the disciples collectively? (Last Lesson.) 6. Had Peter already had a personal interview with Jesus? (Luke 24. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 5.) 7. What special message had been brought him? (Mark 16. 7.) 8. Why was it fitting that his avowal of Christ should be made publicly? 9. What boast had Peter made of having greater love for Jesus than the other disciples? (Matt. 26. 33.) 10. Why did Jesus repeat His question three times? 11. What lesson in forgiveness had Peter received from Jesus? (Matt. 18. 21–35.) 12. To what does verse 20 refer? (John 13. 21–26.) 13. Read about the Ascension in Luke and Acts.

LESSON XI — JUNE 14

THE RISEN CHRIST BY THE SEA OF GALILEE

John 21.12–23. (Read John 21. 1–25.) Commit v. 15.

Golden Text

Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Matt. 28. 20.

LESSON TEXT John 21. 12–23 TIME April or May, A. D. 30

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.
13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.
14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.
15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.
16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.
17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.
18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.
19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.
20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?
21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do?*
22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.
23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

12. *Come and dine.* R. V., *Come and break your fast.* Our word *breakfast* is compounded of *break* and *fast. Ask.* R. V., *inquire.*

13. *Jesus then cometh.* R.V., *Jesus cometh. Bread.* R. V., *the bread.* R. V. margin, *loaf. Fish.* R. V., *the fish.* The use of the article indicates that it was bread and fish that Jesus had provided. See verse 9. "The action of the Saviour here may be regarded as symbolical of the care and bounty with which He was to provide for the temporal as well as spiritual wants of His followers; in the same way as the signal success which had just attended their efforts under His direction (verse 11) has been regarded as a renewed pledge

of the blessing with which He would crown their labors as fishers of men."

14. *The third time.* See John 20. 19–26. John is recording his own witness together with the other disciples, and omits here Christ's private appearance to Mary Magdalene and to Peter (Luke 24. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 5). *Shewed himself to his disciples.* R. V., *was manifested to the disciples.*

15. *Dined.* R. V., *broken their fast. Jonas.* R. V., *John. Lovest thou me more than these?* More than these disciples love me. Compare Peter's boast in Matt. 26. 33. *Thou knowest.* Peter relies on Jesus' knowledge of him; he is not self-assertive as on former occasions. *I love thee.* As the margin of the Revised Version states, the word *love* in Jesus' question and in Peter's answer represents two different Greek words, ἀγαπαν, in the question, expresses esteem, honor, love of the highest spiritual sort; φιλειν, in the answer, expresses love of a friend. The third time Jesus uses the word that Peter uses. Much has been written in regard to the force of these words as used by Jesus and as used by Peter, but it is probable that they spoke Aramaic, not Greek, and while the distinction exists in the Greek words, they seem nevertheless to be used interchangeably by classic writers, and in Luke the verb ἀγαπαν is used for the Pharisee's "love" of the chief seats in the synagogue. *Feed my lambs.* "Jesus could again trust him, and could leave in his hands those whom He loved."

16. *The second time.* R. V., *a second time. Jonas.* R. V., *John. Feed.* R. V., *tend.*

17. *The third time.* Peter had denied his Lord three times, and three times he is given opportunity to re-affirm his love and receive his commission. *Jonas.* R. V., *John.*

18. *Thou girdedst thyself.* The figure was suggested, perhaps, by Peter's act mentioned in verse 7, but it symbolized energetic preparation for work. *When thou shalt be old.* According to tradition, Peter lived thirty years longer. *Carry thee whither thou wouldest not.* Explained in the next verse.

19. *This spake he.* R. V., *Now this he spake. What death.* R. V., *what manner of death.* According to tradition he did not die a natural death, but was crucified. Origen says that at his own request he was crucified with his head downward. *He should glorify God.* During the early years of persecution the death of the martyrs was commonly spoken of as a glorifying of God. Probably it arose from John 12. 23. *Follow me.* Jesus was evidently withdrawing from the group of disciples. See the next verse. But Peter sees the spiritual meaning of His words also.

20. *Then Peter.* R. V., *Peter. Who also leaned on His breast at supper.* R. V., *who also leaned back on his breast at the supper.* See John 13. 25. *Which.* R. V., *who.*

21. *Peter seeing.* R. V., *Peter therefore seeing. Saith.* Moved by friendly interest and curiosity. *And what shall this man do?* R. V., margin, Greek, *and this man, what?*

22. *If I will.* He is Lord of life and death. *Till I come.* Many refer this to the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 (which probably John alone of the Apostles lived to see). "One of Christ's many advents before the final advent." It seems, however, more natural to understand this sentence as a supposition, not a statement that John would live or would not live till Christ's coming. *Follow thou me. Thou* is emphatic.

23. *Then went this saying abroad.* R. V., *This saying therefore went forth.*

The brethren. See John 20. 17. *He shall not die.* R. V., *that he should not die.* In the first century it was believed that Christ would come again before all who had known Him on earth had passed away.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

15. *Thou knowest that I love thee.* "Lord, Thou knowest everything, all I said and all I did and all I am, but this Thou also knowest, that beneath the foul scum of my outer life, the deepest thing in my heart is my love to Thee. By that love which has borne no fruit, which has failed in the hour of need, which has been mastered by fear, but which is real and is my very self, by that let me be judged." And Jesus confirmed his appeal and sent him forth on his apostolic mission, saying, "Feed my sheep." *John Watson.*

17. *Peter was grieved.* He was grieved because by the threefold interrogation he was reminded that the threefold denial of which he had been guilty afforded ground for calling his love in question. It was grief, however, not irritation, anger, or shame. There is no pride, passion, or vanity in this man's soul, but only holy, meek contrition, a penitent, chastised spirit. The man who can so take allusions to his sins is not only fit to tend the sheep, but even to nurse the lambs. He will be tender towards offenders, not with the spurious charity which can not afford to condemn sin strongly, but with the genuine charity of one who has himself received mercy for sins sincerely repented. *A. B. Bruce, Training of the Twelve.*

22. *Follow thou me.* Your love must be such that it will lead you to follow Me, whatever awaits you. You may have manifold and bitter trials; a violent death when you are an old man will be your lot; nevertheless, follow Me; if that love that you have thrice so emphatically confessed is genuine, you will not only gladly feed My sheep, but for My sake you will die without a murmur, lashed to a cross. Last of all, if your love is genuine, it will enable you to be steadfast in My service irrespective of what I do to others. No matter how I may order the life of John, his career and fate do not change your duty. *Galusha Anderson.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

18. *When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself;; when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee.* Oriental writers have described the manner in which the long girdle is wound about the waist. This girdle, or sash, as we would call it, is about two feet wide and four or five yards long. The young man throws one end over a hook or post, spreads out the other end and starts it around his body by turning quickly round and round until he is wound up. He then takes down the fastened end and tucks it under the folds. An aged, feeble man can not do this. As he stretches out his arms and lets another wind the girdle about him, he is the picture of helplessness.

20. *Who leaned back on his breast at the supper.* In reclining at table, one usually lay upon his left side so that his right hand was free to hold the food, and his head would thus be near the breast of the person on his left. At the Last Supper John's position was on the right of Jesus.

23. *That disciple should not die.* The slow-hearted disciples misconstrued His words, taking them to mean that John would not die but would live on until the

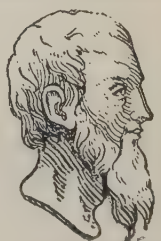
Lord returned in His glory. The idea seemed reasonable enough in early days when it was believed that the Second Advent was imminent; and it was confidently believed notwithstanding the protest of the Apostles. Nay, after John had actually died it still persisted. His grave was shown at Ephesus for several centuries, and as late as St. Augustine's day it was alleged that he was not really dead but only lying asleep, and that the earth which covered him heaved gently to his breathing. And in the eighteenth century the saintly Lavater clung to the idea. He believed that John was alive upon the earth, and it was his heart's desire and prayer that it might be given him to meet the Apostle whom Jesus loved; and he would wistfully scan the face of every stranger if haply it might be he. *David Smith, The Days of His Flesh.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, as Jesus had directed, and while awaiting their Lord's coming seven of them went fishing on the Sea of Galilee. The scene of our lesson is on the waters and the shore of the Sea of Galilee, perhaps in the northeastern part where Jesus once sought a quiet retreat and was followed by the five thousand whom He miraculously fed. The ascension was from the Mount of Olives.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you remember a lesson we had two years ago in which Jesus taught Peter about forgiveness? Peter had said to Jesus: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" Peter thought he was allowing for a very generous amount of forgiveness, but Jesus answered: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." It was well for Peter that he had a patient and pardoning Lord, for he needed often to be forgiven. Four Sundays ago we read about Peter's worst offense. What was it? To-day we read how Jesus recalled that sin of Peter's, and how readily and gladly He forgave His penitent disciple.



Head of Peter From a Bronze Medallion Found in the Catacombs, now in the Vatican Library.

Seven of the disciples were together by the Sea of Galilee, most of whom had been fishermen before they left their nets and boats to follow Jesus, and when Peter said "I go a-fishing" the others at once said, "We also come with thee." Were they successful? What happened in the early morning?

For Older Pupils. Forty days intervened between Jesus' resurrection and His ascension. During that time there were ten appearances to His Apostles and disciples that have been recorded in the Gospels and in Acts. By these appearances He proved His resurrection and His divinity, and ratified man's intuitive faith in his own immortality. He taught His Apostles things they could not grasp before His crucifixion, and He gave them His commission to carry on His work. But why did He remain on earth so long? Would not four days have sufficed instead of forty? Was it not forty instead of four because the last lesson in the training-course of the Apostles required time for its mastery? Jesus never hastened the mental or spiritual growth of His pupils,

never expected them to attain all at once to that unto which He was leading them. Until His death actually occurred, they had not been able to grasp the fact that it was coming and they were to be left alone. During His life with them He had taught them to believe in Him and trust His guidance. Now they are to be left in charge of His work, are to be teachers themselves instead of pupils, under-shepherds instead of sheep. During the forty days they must grasp that fact also, must become used to His absence during long intervals, and must learn to trust Him unseen even as they had trusted Him seen. All this they did learn, and when He gave them His blessing and left to return no more, they went back to Jerusalem with great joy, for they believed His promise that He would be with them even unto the end of the world.

We study to-day the last appearance recorded by John.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Another Chance

Peter's Chance. I want to tell you of a beautiful thing that occurred in connection with a great battle under the command of Sir Charles Napier, one of England's most distinguished commanders. Perhaps you do not know that it is a law of war that when a soldier, through fright, breaks from the line and attempts to run away in battle, his life is forfeited. It is the universal law of war that such a man shall be shot.

In one of the great battles in which Napier was commanding, one of the British soldiers was overcome by fear. His heart quaked, and he saw a chance to drop out of the line and run for the rear. So he started; but he was caught by some of his fellow soldiers and they were about to shoot him. Just then Napier came up. The battle was already won at that time, so the great General had an opportunity to stop and consider the case. The soldiers told him about this poor fellow who was running away and that they were going to shoot him. "No," said the General, "give him another chance." And he ordered that when the fight began again, this man should be put in the front rank to have an opportunity to retrieve his good name and show that, after all, at heart he was a brave man and a loyal soldier. And so he proved himself to be, not only in that battle but ever after.

You know that Peter, after having parted from his Master at the time of His arrest, followed afar off and went up into the High Priest's Court, wishing to see what would take place. As one and another and another recognized him as having been one of Christ's followers, Peter's heart failed; and though he did really love Jesus, he broke down and denied that he was one of His disciples. And at length, when charged with it again, he even used an oath and said, "I do not know the Man." What a dreadful and shameful fall that was! And what did it deserve? Would you think that Jesus would ever have such a man among His disciples again, and in the circle of His intimate friends? But remember how Jesus did treat him.

Afterwards, when Jesus found His disciples on the shore and they had eaten together, Jesus recalled all this to Peter by that threefold question: "Peter lovest thou Me?" And then He gave him another chance. He did not condemn, He did not banish him from fellowship and hope, but He said: "Peter, go feed My lambs, take care of My sheep, take up My work once more."

I think the reason why that story of Peter and the Christ has always been very fascinating is just for this reason: It tells us that when any of us fail, when we do a thing of which we are ashamed and which we know deserves condemnation, Jesus does not condemn us, He does not cut us off from hope; but He gives us another chance. *Frank T. Bayley,* in *Little Ten Minutes.*

What is Failure? A physician returned home late one night exhausted from the severe strain of the day, and took a glass of brandy to ward off a chill he feared was coming. This aroused within himself an appetite which he had not known was there. Again and again he yielded to the temptation, and in three years' time his practice was gone and his friends expected to see him fill soon a drunkard's grave. Then he made a firm resolution that he would trust God for the strength to overcome his enemy, and it seemed to others that he had entirely broken away from his evil habit. His practice returned, and every one believed in his reform. But one night he sought a friend and told him that he was discouraged, he should fight no longer. Twice in the past year he had yielded, and had locked himself up till sober. His attempt had been a miserable failure. "What!" exclaimed his friend. "Three hundred and sixty-three days of success and only two of failure? Why, here is no cause for discouragement. Let us thank God for such a splendid beginning, and start in on the fight once more with His help."

The Lesson given the Israelites. The Israelites had sinned and they had been defeated at Ai. Then "the hearts of the people melted, and became as water," and Joshua "fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of Jehovah, until the evening, he and the elders of Israel." "Oh, Lord, what shall I say, after that Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies," he cried, and Jehovah answered: "Get thee up; wherefore art thou thus fallen upon thy face? Israel hath sinned; yea, they have even transgressed my covenant which I commanded them. Therefore they can not stand before their enemies. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow." No longer were they to lie prone on the ground with their hearts weak as water. The command was to arise, make atonement for the sin committed, and then continue their advance. Take to heart this lesson given the Israelites in Canaan. Having sinned, do not be discouraged, but acknowledge your sin and seek forgiveness, and forget it and press onward in your struggle for a Christ-like life. "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" should be your constant question. "Do ye next thynge" repeats George Macdonald in one of his stories. The new opportunity is yours, greet it eagerly.

II Feed My Lambs

A Means of Spiritual Growth. "Have you ever thought why it is, that God leaves so large a part of the human race still in the darkness of heathenism?" questions Kanzo Uchimura. And then he answers, "I think it is that your Christianity may live and grow by your efforts to diminish this darkness." Certainly this was the way in which Christ caused Peter's Christianity to grow. He forgave Peter his sin of denial, He restored Him to his place among the apostles, and He gave him his commission. In feeding and tending Christ's lambs and sheep he became a whole-hearted, self-sacrificing shepherd; there was never any doubt after this about his loyalty to his Master.

Who are the Lambs and Sheep. It is not enough for us that we take care

of our own children; our neighbor's children, also, are ours in some sense. It is not enough that we take care of our own neighborhood: all that are confederated in church connection with us have a claim upon our interest, and we have reciprocal duties toward them. Nor is it enough that our own churches are objects of interest and duty to us: the town or city, the country that holds the town or city, the nation that encloses the country,— all these, also, belong to us. There is a brotherhood that carries us out to every human being. Nor are they alone ours that belong to our nation; all that belong to every nation on the globe,— all are ours. Though they may not know us,— and though we may not be able even to pronounce the name by which they are known, to them belongs the influence of Christianity, and they are to receive it at our hands. We are bound to take care of the world. We are bound to include in our desires, plans, aims, and Christian ambitions, all that God thinks of when He looks down upon the face of the earth. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

The Purpose that should animate Every Christian. The story is often repeated of an officer's arriving late on the scene of battle with his troops, rushing to his chief for instructions where to lead them, and receiving this answer: "Go where you please; there is good fighting all along the line." There is good fighting all along the line for Me, rings out the command of Christ through the ages. Whether in private or public life, in home or foreign missions, there are lambs needing to be fed and sheep needing to be tended.

The purpose of the "League for the Service of Christ" organized at Bryn Mawr College, should be the purpose of every Christian disciple. Here is the statement as it reads in the Constitution of the League: —

"The purpose of every individual active member of the League shall be:

(a) To declare her belief in Jesus Christ as God, and as only Saviour and Lord of her life, and to bring into personal relationship with Him as such the lives of others who do not so know Him.

(b) To invigorate the spiritual life of the League by learning to surrender the individual will to God the Father, and the individual life to the control of the Holy Spirit.

(c) To work for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ throughout the whole world."

III What is that to Thee?

Follow thou Me. Christ had lifted the veil of the future and showed Peter something of the fate before him, and his curiosity was aroused to learn what was to be John's fate. He went beyond his province in this, and his Lord rebuked him. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Never mind about John and Thomas and Philip, be not concerned about their probable future, but consecrate yourself to My service. Follow Me.

What countless discourses have been held as to the probable fate of this or that Bible character! How many have said that Judas, who betrayed his Lord, was the greatest of sinners, and that there could be no doubt about his abiding place, yet the Bible merely tells us that he went to his own place. Each one of us shall go to his own place. To the monks of the Middle Ages the question of Solomon's fate was one of intense interest. On the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa, Benozzo Gozzoli, a pupil of Fra Angelico, represented the Last Judgment. He pictured the sheep on the one side and the goats on the other, and in

the center, directly before the awful throne of judgment, he pictured Solomon arising from an open grave and held suspended by his hair by angels who were waiting to learn whether to place him with the sheep or with the goats. Perhaps these monks were too anxious about Solomon's fate, and too careless about their own.

A Wise Indifference. Epictetus said that there is one great classification of the universe for each man: the things which concern him, and the things which do not concern him.

"Oh, that mine eye might closèd be
To what concerns me not to see;
That deafness might possess mine ear
To what concerns me not to hear."

A Common Weakness. Peter was prone to meddle with matters beyond his sphere, and to manage other people's affairs for them. Such a disposition always betrays a lack of devotion to one's own calling. To brood over the easier lot of our friend, to envy him his capacity and success, to grudge him his advantages and happiness, is to betray an injurious weakness in ourselves. To be unduly anxious about the future of any part of Christ's Church, as if He had omitted to arrange for that future, to act as if we were essential to the well being of some part of Christ's Church, is to intermeddle like Peter. To show astonishment or entire incredulity or misunderstanding if a course in life quite different from ours is found to be quite as useful to Christ's people and to the world as ours; to show that we have not yet apprehended how many men, how many minds, how many methods, it takes to make a world, is to incur the rebuke of Peter. *Marcus Dods, The Gospel of John.*

The Personal Responsibility. When a man foresees a great temptation that is coming, it is always better that, instead of turning to his neighbors and saying, as he searches their faces, "I wonder who will do this wicked thing," he should turn to himself and say, "Is it possible that I am the man who will do it?" When the wind is rising it is good for each ship at sea to look to its own ropes and sails, and not stand gazing to see how ready the other ships are to meet it. *Phillips Brooks.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

"Watching the other man's patch will not keep the weeds out of your own."

Every Christian is at least a minor missionary. *Christina Rossetti.*

He who loves best his fellow man
Is loving God the holiest way he can. *Alice Cary.*

Let us not be inquisitive or solicitous to know the judgment to be pronounced upon our brethren; or to solve the enigmas of their destiny, but take heed to our own. *William E. Gladstone.*

Sin is mighty; it can do awful things in the way of disturbing the relation between man and his God; but there is one thing it can not do; it can not make Him who loves us, not because of anything in ourselves, but because of what He is in Himself, cease to love us. *Alexander Maclaren.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly. Rom. 5. 20.

It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. Acts 1. 7.

Love covereth all transgressions. Prov. 10. 12.

Let none of you suffer as . . . a meddler in other men's matters. 1 Pet. 4. 15.

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Matt. 16. 24.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor. John 2. 26.

Tend the flock of God which is among you . . . and when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Pet. 5. 2, 4.

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible. Eph. 6. 24.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

To each one of us, as well as to Simon, the risen Lord comes with His soul-testing question, Lovest thou me? Can I answer the challenge as Simon did, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee"?

George, son of James, lovest thou Me? Prove thyself my loyal follower in thy daily life. Mary, daughter of Helen, lovest thou Me? Instruct My lambs. We can not truthfully say with Peter that we love our Lord unless we feed His sheep. My love to Christ can be expressed only in terms of service. The purpose of the members of "The League for the Service of Christ," organized at Bryn Mawr College, shall be my purpose.

Upon each black sin of denial Peter turned the white light of avowal. He could not efface the denials, but they loomed less threateningly under that light. Sin must be acknowledged and atoned for.

The only qualification I need to bring to the work of Christ is love for Christ. He who gives me my commission will qualify me for my work. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who shall teach me all things even as Christ promised, I shall succeed in His service.

Christ bade Peter carry on His work, but told him plainly that such service would cost him his life. Christ calls no one to engage in His service without warning him what the cost will be. It is no light thing rightly to bear the name of Christian. A Christian must be the servant of Christ; must be self-forgetful and self-sacrificing. Have I counted the cost? Am I ready to enlist in His service?

A besetting sin is not conquered easily. The struggle for mastery will be a severe one, and there must be a brave beginning after each failure. If I am fighting in Christ's name and for His sake I am sure of another chance, and of victory in the end.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The disciples were in Galilee, whither Jesus bade them go and await His coming. Seven of them were together by the Sea of Galilee, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two others. Peter announced his determination to "go fishing," and the others replied, "We also go with thee." That night

they caught nothing. In the morning a Stranger standing on the shore called to them; "Children, have ye aught to eat?" "No," they answered. "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find," He directed. They obeyed, and so many fishes were caught in the net that they were scarcely able to draw it.

John, the man of clearest vision, was the first to discern that the Stranger was the Lord, and Peter, the man of quickest impulses, girded his fisher's coat about him and swam ashore. The others followed in a small boat. On the shore they saw a fire of coals on which fish were laid, and there was bread near by. The Lord bade them bring the fish they had caught, and Peter helped them "tug the miracle to shore." Must not the two pairs of brothers have recalled that other miraculous draught of fishes, when Jesus told them that from henceforth they should "catch men"?

"Come and break your fast," was the Lord's gracious invitation now to the amazed disciples, whose reverence withheld them from asking Him, "Who art Thou?" They did not doubt that He was the Lord, but they would gladly have heard Him make the affirmation. With the Lord as their Host, they partook of the bread and fish. To Peter the Lord then turned. Three times had Peter publicly denied Him, and now must he three times declare his love for Him, and receive His commission to feed His lambs and tend His sheep. When he was young he had girded himself and gone wherever he would, Jesus reminded him, but the time was coming when he would stretch out his helpless hands and let another gird him, and he would be carried where he would not go. With these words, John explains, Jesus indicated Peter's martyrdom. "Follow Me," said Jesus. Peter turned and saw John following at a distance. Impelled by curiosity as well as interest, Peter inquired of Jesus what John's fate should be. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Thy part is to follow Me," returned Jesus. Many misunderstood Jesus' meaning and supposed that he, John, should not die. He was the disciple who had written these things of which he was a witness, and his witness was true.

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The missionary enterprise is not the Church's afterthought; it is Christ's forethought. *Henry van Dyke.*

2. The divine judgment is based on the tendency of a life, rather than on separate falls.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Assign for special preparation whatever work you purpose taking up in class next Sunday. For suggestions see next lesson.

LESSON XII — JUNE 21

REVIEW

Read 1 Cor. 15. 1–20.

Golden Text for the Quarter

But these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through His name. John 20. 31.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LAST TWELVE CHAPTERS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

(A suggestion. Let each of the following sections be committed to memory by a pupil, and on Review Sunday let the nineteen pupils together come before the school and recite in order the paragraphs learned.)

Lesson I. For the consolation of the man born blind to whom Jesus had given sight and whom the Pharisees had excommunicated, as well as to rebuke the latter, Jesus gave His allegories of the Sheepfold and of the Good Shepherd. "The thief enters the sheepfold, not by the door, but by climbing over the wall. The shepherd enters by the door, which the porter opens for him, the sheep know him, he calls them by name and they follow him, but they will not follow the voice of a stranger." Jesus' hearers did not understand the spiritual meaning of His words, and He therefore explained them. "I am the door of the sheep," He affirmed. "Whoever enters the fold, the kingdom of God, through Me, shall be saved, and shall find safety and food. The thieves and robbers are those who, like the Pharisees, falsely claim to have authority; these false shepherds are selfish and cruel and harmful; I am the Good Shepherd who gives up His life for the sheep."

"The hired shepherd flees in time of danger, but the True Shepherd defends the sheep with His life. He knows His sheep and they know Him, even as He and the Father know each other; other sheep there are, too, not of this fold, who shall yet know Him. His life is not taken from Him; He gives it up willingly." The Jews were divided in their opinion of Jesus; some declared He was mad and had a demon, but others said, Could a demon open the eyes of the blind? They came to Him as He was walking in the temple porch, and said, "If Thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." "I have told you," Jesus declared, "and My works testify of Me; I and the Father are One." For these words, which they called blasphemy, the Jews sought to stone Jesus, but He escaped from them.

While in Perea Jesus heard of the illness of Lazarus of Bethany. "This sickness is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby," He declared to His disciples. After remaining two days longer, Jesus told them that Lazarus was dead, and He was going to Bethany. They tried to dissuade Him because of the danger, for the Jews had so

recently sought to stone Him. "Let us go," said Jesus, and Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Martha met Jesus outside the village, and to her He said, "I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth on Me, though He die, yet shall He live." Martha hastened home and called Mary. The Jews from Jerusalem who were in the house with her, thought she was going to Lazarus' tomb to weep, and they followed her.

Lesson II. When Mary reached Jesus, she fell at His feet exclaiming, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews with her, "He groaned in His spirit," and asked where they had laid Lazarus. "Come and see," they answered. Jesus wept. Some of the Jews said, How He loved him, but others said, If He could open the eyes of the blind man, could He not have prevented this death? At the tomb Jesus bade them remove the stone before the opening, but Martha remonstrated, for her brother had now been dead four days and by this time his body must be decaying. Jesus reminded her that He had told her she should see the glory of God, and the stone was removed. Jesus then thanked God for hearing Him, doing this for the benefit of those standing by, that they might believe that He was sent by the Father. Then He cried, "Lazarus, come forth," and he that was dead came forth. "Free him from his grave-clothes, and let him go," said Jesus.

This miracle made many believe in Jesus. It was reported to the Pharisees in Jerusalem, and Caiaphas, the high priest, counseled that Jesus be put to death. Jesus went to the village of Ephraim near the border of Samaria. The passover came, and the crowds in Jerusalem wondered whether or not Jesus would appear at the feast.

Lesson III. Six days before the passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where a supper was given Him. Martha served, and Lazarus was there. Mary in loving gratitude anointed the feet of Jesus with very precious ointment, and then wiped them with her hair. Judas grumbled. Why was not the ointment sold for three hundred shillings and given to the poor? he asked, not because he cared for the poor, John remarks, but because he was a thief, and having the common money bag, could take away what was put therein. "Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying," said Jesus, "for the poor ye have always with you; but Me ye have not always." Crowds came to gaze upon Jesus and upon Lazarus, and the chief priests deemed that it would be necessary to put Lazarus to death, because on his account so many believed in Jesus.

The next day, Sunday, Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The multitude spread palm branches before Him and shouted, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel," and the Pharisees said among themselves, "Behold, how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after Him."

John passes over the events of Monday and the parables spoken by Jesus and the questions answered on Tuesday, but records the desire of certain Greeks to see Jesus, and His last public utterance in which He spoke of the law of life through death, the necessity of His sufferings and death, and of the life of self-sacrificing service to which His followers were called. A voice from Heaven strengthened Him for the fate before Him.

John here comments upon the unbelief of the Jews, most of whom did

not believe Jesus in spite of His works, and declares that it was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Many of the rulers had believed, but had been kept from acknowledging their belief through fear of men. Then John gives Jesus' words in regard to His mission as the Light of the World; He was sent by God, and in receiving or rejecting Him men received or rejected God who sent Him.

Lesson IV. Wednesday and the daylight of Thursday passed. In the evening Jesus met with His disciples in Jerusalem to celebrate the passover. A strife arose among the disciples as to who was the greatest among them, and Jesus gave them a lesson in humility. In the full knowledge that His hour was come when He should leave the world and return to His Father, and that Judas Iscariot had arranged to betray Him, Jesus arose from the table, and taking a towel and a basin of water, began to wash the disciples' feet. Peter declared that He should never wash his feet. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," Jesus told him, and then Peter exclaimed, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all," returned Jesus. The eleven disciples were, despite their faults, sincere followers of Jesus, and therefore might be called clean; Judas was the exception. When Jesus had washed the feet of all and had returned to His place at the table, He told them that He had given them an example, and as He, their Lord and Teacher, had performed for them an act of humble, self-sacrificing service, so they ought to perform such services for others.

"If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them," said Jesus. Then He announced that one of them was to betray Him. The disciples wondered who it could be, and Peter bade John, who reclined at the table next to Jesus, find out who it was. Jesus told John it was the one to whom He should hand a morsel of food. He handed it to Judas, and said, "What thou doest, do quickly." The others did not understand, but Judas did and at once left the room.

Perhaps at this point the Lord's Supper was instituted. John does not tell us of this, but gives Jesus' announcement of His departure from them and His "new commandment" to love one another as He had loved them. Peter asked Jesus where He was going, and Jesus told him that he could not follow Him now, but that he should follow Him afterwards. "Why can not I follow Thee even now? I will lay down my life for Thee," Peter boldly declared, but Jesus quietly said, "Wilt thou? Verily, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice."

Lesson V. Amazement and sorrow filled the hearts of the disciples at all these disclosures of Jesus, and He said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." Then He told them there were many mansions in His Father's house whither He was going to prepare a place for them. The way they knew. Thomas interrupted Him, saying, "We know not whither Thou goest: how can we know the Way?" "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, only through Me can one come unto the Father," Jesus answered. "If ye had known Me, ye would have known the Father also." Philip then asked to be shown the Father, and Jesus rebuked him, wondering that he could have been with Him so long and yet not have known Him, for in Him he had seen the Father. Then He counseled them to believe His word that He and the Father were one, or, if they could not do that, to believe the

witness of His works. He who believed Him should do greater works than He had done, because He was going to the Father and would become their spiritual Helper, granting the requests that were made in His name and therefore were in accord with the Father's will.

Jesus assured His disciples that He should not leave them desolate, for the Comforter would be with them for ever. If they loved Him, they would keep His commandments. Let them not be troubled, but let them rather rejoice that He was going to the Father. Then Jesus gave His allegory of the Vine and the Branches: He was the True Vine, they were the branches; if they abode in Him they should bear much fruit. They were His friends, if they did the things He commanded, and it was His commandment that they love one another. Then He warned them of the persecutions and death they should suffer on His account.

Lesson VI. These things Jesus had told them, He said, that they might be prepared for the persecutions when they came, and remembering that He had foretold them, might be strengthened in their loyalty to so omnipotent a Saviour. Because of these warnings they were filled with sorrow, and did not ask Him about the place to which He was going. But, difficult of belief as it seemed to them, it was nevertheless true, that it was for their advantage that He left them, for after He had gone He should send the Comforter to them, who would convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. Many things He had to tell them whose meaning they could not then grasp, but the Comforter should teach them, guide them into all the truth, declare to them the things that were to come, glorify Him and complete His work.

"A little while, and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me," said Jesus, and the disciples were perplexed. What could He mean? Then Jesus told them that they should weep and lament, and the world rejoice, but their sorrow should be turned into joy. What He had hitherto spoken in proverbs should be told them plainly. He had come from the Father and was returning to the Father. His disciples said that now He was speaking plainly to them, and they believed that He came forth from God. The hour was coming, Jesus warned them, when they should desert Him, but He should not be alone, for the Father would be with Him. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," He cried, for He knew the victory on the cross would soon be over. Then He uttered His farewell prayer: first asking the Father to glorify Him that He might glorify the Father; then praying that His disciples might be kept from the evil in the world, and might be one even as the Father and He are one; and finally praying for those who believe through the disciples' word, that they might believe the Father had sent Him, and that the love of the Father might be in them, and He in them.

Lesson VII. With the eleven disciples Jesus left Jerusalem and went to the Garden of Gethsemane on Mount Olivet. The agony in the Garden John omits, but tells at once of the coming of Judas with armed officers and soldiers to arrest his Lord. Jesus stepped forth to meet them and asked, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth." "I am He." Awed by His majesty and calmness, the soldiers started backward and fell to the ground. Again Jesus asked His question and receiving the same answer bade them let His disciples go their way. Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. Jesus commanded Peter to put up his sword, saying, "The cup

which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" The officers then bound Jesus and brought Him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas questioned Him about His teaching, and He replied that He had taught publicly, those who had heard Him could answer. One of the officers then struck Jesus, saying, "Answerest Thou the high priest so?" "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" quietly returned Jesus. Then they brought Him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Meanwhile Peter and John had followed Jesus. John, being known to the high priest, was allowed to enter the court, and he persuaded the maid who kept the door to admit Peter. She asked Peter if he were not "one of this man's disciples," but he said he was not. As he stood warming himself at a fire in the court, another asked the same question and again Peter denied his Lord. A kinsman of Malchus asked if he had not seen him in the Garden, and Peter denied a third time. And straightway the cock crew.

From the trial and condemnation before Caiaphas Jesus was taken to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Pilate asked Jesus if He were the King of the Jews, and Jesus told him that His kingdom was not of this world. Pilate went out to the Jews (who would not enter the Prætorium, for they would thereby become ceremonially unclean) and reported that he found no crime in Jesus. Should he not release Him, as it was customary to release one prisoner at the passover? But they cried out, "Not this man, but Barabbas," who was a robber. Pilate allowed Jesus to be scourged, and the soldiers mocked Him; then he brought Jesus out to the Jews and said, "Behold the man!" But the chief priests and officers cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate talked again with Jesus, and made another attempt to release Him, but the Jews said craftily, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend, every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar," and Pilate delivered Jesus up to be crucified. On the place called Golgotha they crucified Jesus between two thieves. Over the cross Pilate had this title written in Hebrew and Latin and Greek, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The Jews asked him to change it to "He said, I am the King of the Jews," but Pilate refused. The soldiers took Jesus' garments and cast lots for His seamless coat. The mother of Jesus, her sister Mary, Mary Magdalene, and John were standing near the cross, and Jesus commended His mother to John's care.

Lesson VIII. "I thirst," said Jesus, and they filled a sponge with sour wine and held it to His lips. "It is finished," He said, and gave up His spirit. Not wishing the bodies to hang on the crosses over the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate to hasten death by breaking the legs of all. This was done to the two thieves, but when the soldiers found that Jesus was already dead one of them pierced His side with a spear. Joseph of Arimathæa, a secret disciple of Jesus, asked and received permission to bury Him. Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds of spices, and after wrapping the body in linen cloths and spices laid it in a new tomb in the garden near by.

Lesson IX. Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found the stone taken away. She hastened to tell Peter and John, and the two disciples ran to see for themselves. John reached the tomb first and looked in. When Peter arrived he entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there, the napkin that had been about Jesus' head rolled up by itself.

John followed him, and saw and believed. As yet they had not known that Jesus must rise again from the dead, John affirms.

While the disciples went back to the city, Mary returned to the tomb to weep. She looked in and beheld two angels, who asked her why she wept. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him," she answered. Turning around Mary saw Jesus standing near, but not recognizing Him through her tears she thought Him the gardener, and besought him to tell her where he had laid the body of her Lord. "Mary," said Jesus. "Rabboni,—Teacher," she exclaimed, and probably flung herself at His feet as if to hold Him there, for Jesus rebuked her. "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father"—the old life was not to be renewed —He said; and bade her say to His brethren, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father." Mary went to the disciples and told them that she had seen the Lord.

Lesson X. On the evening of that day the disciples were gathered together. The door was shut for fear of the Jews, but Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. "Peace be unto you," was His greeting. He convinced them of His identity, and brought joy to their hearts by showing them His hands and His side. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," He said, and after breathing on them further said, "Receive ye the holy Spirit; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Thomas was not present at this meeting, and he refused to believe the word of the others. He would not believe that the Lord was risen, he declared, unless he could put his own fingers into the print of the nails and his own hand into Jesus' side. A week later Jesus appeared to the disciples again. This time Thomas was with them, and Jesus bade him touch His hands and His side, and "be not faithless, but believing." "My Lord and my God," was Thomas' testimony. "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed;" said Jesus to him, "blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

"Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book," adds the writer of this Gospel, "but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name."

Some time later seven of the disciples, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, and John and two others, were at the Sea of Galilee, awaiting the promised coming of their risen Lord. "I go a-fishing," said Peter, and the others joined him. They toiled all night but caught nothing. In the morning a Stranger called to them from the shore, and bade them cast their net on the right side of the ship. They obeyed, and caught a multitude of fishes. "It is the Lord," exclaimed John, and Peter at once jumped overboard and swam ashore. The other disciples followed in a boat, dragging the net with them. On the shore they saw fish laid upon a fire of coals and bread near by. Jesus told them to bring their fish. Peter helped bring them to land, one hundred and fifty-three in all, and yet the net did not break.

Lesson XI. Jesus invited them to come and break their fast. The awed disciples knew He was the Lord, and did not dare question Him. After Jesus had given them the bread and fish, He turned to Peter and said, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" "Thou knowest that I love Thee,"

humbly Peter answered. "Feed My lambs," commissioned Jesus. Three times Jesus asked Peter this question, and Peter answered in the same way. After telling Peter of the death by which he should glorify God, as the Evangelist explains Jesus' words, Jesus bade Peter follow Him. Looking around and seeing John following, Peter questioned, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me," answered Jesus. Because of this saying the mistaken idea arose among the brethren that the disciple should not die.

> "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

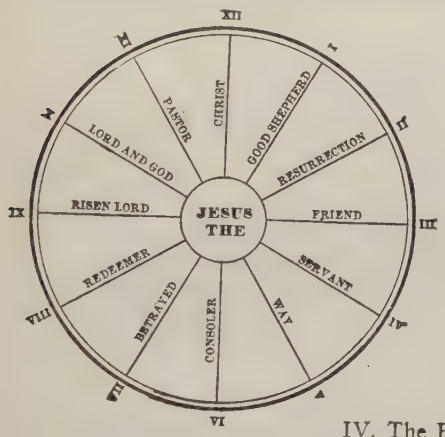
OUTLINE OF THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

I. The Growth of Antagonism. (Compare Review Outline of First Quarter.)
   1. After Giving Sight to the Man Born Blind. I.
   2. After the Resurrection of Lazarus. II, III.

II. Christ's Revelation of Himself during His Last Night with His Disciples.
   1. Christ an Example. IV.
   2. Christ and the Father. V.
   3. Christ and the Holy Spirit. VI.

III. The Passion and the Resurrection.
   1. Christ's Betrayal. VII.
   2. Christ's Crucifixion and Burial. VIII.
   3. Christ's Resurrection. IX.

IV. The Forty Days.
   1. Two Appearances to the Apostles. X.
   2. The Epilogue. XI.



REVIEW OUTLINES OF THE LESSONS

1. Jesus the Good Shepherd.
   - The Word Picture. 1–5.
   - The Explanation. 6–9.
   - The True Shepherd. 10, 11.
2. The Raising of Lazarus.
   - On the Way to the Tomb. 32–37.
   - At the Tomb. 38–42.
   - The Miracle. 43, 44.
3. Jesus Anointed at Bethany.
   - The Anointing. 1–3.
   - The Criticism. 4–8.
   - The Plotting. 9–21.

4. Jesus Teaches Humility.
   - The Teacher. 1–3.
   - The Service. 4, 5.
   - The Protest. 6–11.

5. Our Heavenly Home.
   - Words of Comfort. 1–4.
   - Jesus and the Father. 5–11.
   - Jesus and the Disciples. 12–14.

6. The Mission of the Holy Spirit.
   - Disciples' Sorrow. 4–6.
   - The Comforter. 7.
   - The Work of the Holy Spirit. 8–15.

7. Jesus Betrayed and Denied.
   - The Betrayal. 1–3.
   - The Conversation. 4–9.
   - Peter's Denial. 24–27.

8. Jesus' Death and Burial.
   - "It is Finished." 28–30.
   - The Descent from the Cross. 31–37.
   - The Burial. 38–42.

9. Jesus Risen from the Dead.
   - Mary's Announcement. 1, 2.
   - The Empty Tomb. 3–10.
   - Mary sees Jesus. 11–18.

10. Jesus Appears to the Disciples.
    - Thomas Incredulous. 19–25.
    - Thomas Convinced. 26–29.
    - Purpose of the Gospel. 30, 31.

11. The Risen Christ by the Sea of Galilee.
    - The Breakfast. 12–14.
    - "Lovest thou Me?" 15–18.
    - The Rebuke. 19–23.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. To what part of the sheepfold did Jesus compare Himself? What is the sheepfold? Who are the sheep? Who were the thieves and robbers? What is the Golden Text? Who is the Good Shepherd?

2. Where did Lazarus and Martha and Mary live? How long had Lazarus been dead when Jesus came to Bethany? What did Mary say to Him on His return? How did Jesus show His sorrow? What did He do? What is the Golden Text? What does it mean?

3. How did Mary show her gratitude and love to Jesus? Where was the feast held at which she anointed Him? Who else were there? What did Judas say about her deed? Why did he say it? What did Jesus say about it? What is the Golden Text?

4. What did Jesus do to the disciples in Jerusalem the last night of His life? Who objected? Why did he object? What did Jesus say? Then what did Peter answer? Of what had Jesus given them an example? What did He tell them they should do? What is the Golden Text?

5. How did Jesus comfort His disciples in His last talk with them? What did He say about their heavenly home, in the words of the Golden Text? What did He promise His disciples about that home? How could they know the way thither? What question did Philip ask? What did Jesus answer?

6. What is the Golden Text of the sixth lesson? Why were the disciples sorrowful at the time Jesus told them of the coming of the Comforter? Why was it not best that Jesus should remain longer with them?

7. What is the Golden Text of the seventh lesson? What disciple betrayed Jesus? Where? Who went with him? What did Jesus say to them? What did they do? Again what did Jesus say? What did Peter do to the high priest's servant? How did Jesus rebuke Peter? To whom did they bring Jesus for trial? How many times did Peter deny his Lord? Why did he do this? What happened just after Peter's third denial? Of what did this remind him?

8. Between whom was Jesus crucified? What did the soldiers who crucified Him do with His garments? Who stood near the cross? To which disciple did Jesus leave the care of His mother? How was His thirst relieved? What was done to the legs of the thieves? Why was not this done to Jesus? What was done instead? Who asked permission to bury Jesus? Who brought the spices? Where did they bury Him? What is the Golden Text?

9. Who was the first one at the tomb of Jesus? What did she see? To whom did she tell the news? Which disciple reached the tomb first? What did the other disciple do? What did they see? What did this prove? Who spoke to Mary when she returned to the tomb? Then whom did she see? What did Jesus say to her? What did she say? What did Jesus tell her to do? What is the Golden Text?

10. Where were ten of the disciples when Jesus suddenly appeared before them? Which two disciples were not present? What did Jesus say at this time? What did they tell Thomas? What did Thomas say would convince him? Did he have an opportunity to do this? What did he say, in the words of the Golden Text?

11. Where did Jesus meet seven of the disciples? Who were they? What question did Jesus ask of Peter? What did Peter answer? What did Jesus tell him to do? Why did Jesus repeat the question three times? How did Peter show his curiosity in regard to John? How did Jesus rebuke him? What is the Golden Text?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. Describe a sheepfold and the care of sheep in Syria. Why could not the Pharisees understand the purpose of Jesus' picture of the sheepfold? What sort of spiritual teachers were they? In what ways does the figure of the door aptly apply to Jesus' relation to men? Of the shepherd? In the allegory, what does the sheepfold represent? The sheep? What did Jesus say about Himself as the Good Shepherd?

2. Why did not Jesus hasten at once to Bethany on learning that Lazarus was ill? Why was Thomas so despondent about His going? How many people did Jesus restore to life? What effect had the raising of Lazarus upon the belief of the people? What effect had it upon Jesus' life? What other miracles are recorded in the book of John?

3. Where did Jesus tarry on His last journey to Jerusalem? What did Martha do at the feast given there in His honor? Lazarus? Mary? What complaint did Judas make, and how does John interpret his words? On what other occasion was Jesus anointed?

4. How does John preface his account of the washing of the disciples' feet? For what purpose? What traits of character were shown by Peter in his refusal to let Jesus wash his feet? In his next words? What did Jesus mean

by His answer? What did He mean by saying that they should do to others as He had done to them?

5. What promises did Jesus make to His disciples in regard to His coming again? To their works? To their obtaining what they ask from God? To His sending another Helper? What question did Thomas ask, and what did Jesus answer? Philip?

6. How did Jesus seek to arouse the disciples from their sorrow? Why was it expedient that Jesus should go away? What did He say would be the work of the Comforter? By what other words may the Third Person of the Trinity be called?

7. Give an account of the betrayal of Jesus. Of the denials of Peter. In what respects is Judas' deed more despicable than that of Pilate? What became of Pilate? Of Judas?

8. What was the accusation against Jesus in the Jewish trials? In the Roman trials? What was the real reason for the condemnation by the Jews? By Pilate? What was the title written over the cross? Why did the Jews object to this? What were the seven sayings from the cross? Describe the burial of Jesus.

9. Give an account of what Mary Magdalene saw and heard at the tomb on the resurrection morning. What did Peter and John see, and of what did it convince them? What did the Jews say had happened? Why is their statement not believable?

10. Give an account of the appearance of Jesus to the Apostles in the absence of Thomas. Of His appearance to them when Thomas was present. What did Jesus mean by saying, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"? What indicates that the twentieth chapter was intended to be the last in John's Gospel?

11. What led John to write the twenty-first chapter? Describe the fishing scene and the breakfast by the Sea of Galilee. Narrate Jesus' conversation with Peter. Tell the circumstances of the ascension as given in Mark and Luke.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

After picturing the scene of each lesson, let the pupils give the Golden Text, and answer a few questions in regard to the lesson.

1. A Man is talking to a large crowd of people. I can see flocks of sheep being driven to the temple in Jerusalem, and it is about sheep that this Man is talking so earnestly.

2. Here there are two scenes. In the first one, a weeping woman has thrown herself on the ground at the feet of a Man. Many people are standing in groups near by. In the second scene, this Man is pointing to a strange looking figure, closely wrapped about with linen cloths, who stands at the entrance of a tomb, and all the people are gazing at him in amazement.

3. This is a joyous supper scene. A busy woman is waiting upon the people. Another woman, the one whom we saw weeping in the last lesson, is pouring something over the feet of One of the guests, and then wiping them with her hair. There is a man near by who points to her as he talks with other men.

4. Twelve men are reclining at supper, and one Man, who has a towel fastened to His girdle, is pouring water over the feet of one of them into a basin beneath.

5. What an earnest, solemn group of men there is in this scene! The Speaker is talking eagerly and earnestly, and He is twice interrupted by questions from two of His listeners.

6. The same Speaker is addressing the same group of men. He is telling them that He must leave them and they are very sorrowful, but He promises to send some One to take His place.

7. It is midnight in a garden. A large company of soldiers with lanterns and torches and weapons surrounds a group of men. They are looking intently at one Man, who stands out in front of the others and is speaking to them. The scene changes to the open court of a large building where several men are gathered around a fire.

8. Here there are crosses to which three men have been fastened. A soldier is holding a sponge on the end of a stick up to the mouth of the Man in the center. Later the soldiers are striking the ankles of the two men on the outside, and another soldier thrusts his spear into the side of the third Man. Now the body of the Man who had hung between the other two has been taken down, and two men are carefully wrapping it in linen cloths and spices, and are tenderly laying it down in a tomb.

9. Two men are walking together when a woman, greatly excited, runs toward them and tells them something. They hasten their steps; one of them outruns the other, and stoops down to look into a tomb. When the second one reaches the place, he enters the tomb at once, and the first one follows him. After a while they come out and go away. The woman then comes to the tomb and stands there weeping and looking in, but she quickly turns when she hears her name spoken, and rushes eagerly toward the Speaker.

10. Here there is a meeting of men and women who look very sorrowful, but their faces light up with joy as a Man suddenly appears before them. Again we see the same company and the same Man before them. A man who was not in the first company is talking to Him.

11. On the shore of a lake there stands a Man who is giving directions to some fishermen off in a boat. Now the fishermen are hauling in a net full of fishes, and one of the men has jumped overboard and is swimming ashore. All have now gathered around a fire of coals on the shore and are eating. The fisherman who swam ashore is talking with the One who was at first alone on the land; now the two walk off together; the fisherman looks back and sees another man following, and he turns to his Companion and asks a question.

SUBJECTS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW

1. Prepare a two minute talk upon the lesson story of Lesson 1. Lesson 2, etc. (Assign a different lesson to each scholar, or two lessons to each one if the class is small, and have the stories read in order on Review Sunday. In a large class assign also the intervening verses.)

2. The claims of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John.

3. The seven miracles of Jesus recorded in this Gospel.

4. The conversations in the Gospel.

5. Jesus' method with individuals.

6. Who have testified to Jesus in this Gospel, and what is the testimony of each?

7. The instances of unbelief in Jesus recorded in John.

8. The last discourse of Jesus.

9. The six trials of Jesus and their illegality.

10. The chief events and discourses of each day of Passion Week.

11. The trial before Pilate. 12. The character of Pilate.

13. The difference between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels.

14. Read the Gospel of John in the Revised Version, and write a summary of the contents of each paragraph, after the manner of the chapter headings in the Authorized Version.

15. Here is the key verse of the Gospel (20. 31) as arranged by Dr. W. W. White:

Life.
Ye may have life.
Believing ye may have life in His name.
These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name.

That may believe. Read the Gospel and note all the instances of belief and unbelief in Christ, and the cause of each. Some one has found that the word *believe,* in all its forms, occurs about a hundred times in the Gospel.

That Jesus is the Son of God. Read the Gospel through and note all the testimony offered in proof of this statement.

Ye may have life. Read the Gospel and note all the passages in which Jesus is declared to be the source of eternal life, and all those in which the duty of abiding in Jesus is spoken of or portrayed. The word *abide,* in all its forms, is said to occur about forty times in the Gospel.

A REVIEW FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL

Let eleven persons come prepared to conduct this review. As the chalk artist turns over the pictures he has prepared for each lesson, or some one turns the colored lesson picture roll, the subject and golden text should be repeated by the school in concert, and then the one appointed should talk four minutes on that lesson. Great variety may be obtained in this way. One may give a forceful story, another may draw out the lesson by apt questions, a third may recite a poem that enforces the thought of the lesson, a fourth may give a graphic word picture, a fifth may sing a song. A bell tap should give notice when the four minutes are ended.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Where was Paul when he wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians? (See Eph. 3. 1; 4. 1; 6. 20.) 2. Read the entire Epistle. 3. What is the salutation of his letter? (1. 1, 2.) 4. What does Paul mean by saying "Ye were once darkness, but now are light in the Lord"? 5. What does he mean by saying "Walk as children of light"? 6. By what should all our actions be judged? (Verses 10 and 17.) 7. What does "contentious" mean in verse 29? 8. What effects of strong drink are mentioned in this lesson? 9. What effects are not given? 10. What certain prevention of drunkenness does the lesson offer? (Verse 31.) 11. What argument does Paul use in 14. 21 against wine drinking? 12. What other reasons can you give for not taking wine?

TEMPERANCE LESSON

Ephesians 5. 6–21. Commit verses 15, 16.

Golden Text

Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess: but be filled with the spirit. Ephesians 5. 18.

LESSON TEXT Ephesians 5. 6–21

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light:
9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them.*
12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.
13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.
14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is.*
18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;
21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

6. *Vain words.* R. V., *empty words.* Words that are lacking in truth. *These things.* The sins against which Paul is uttering his words of warning. *The children.* R. V., *the sons.*

7. *Be not.* γινεσθε, literally, *become not.* "It is a warning against lapsing into old vices." *Vincent.*

8. *Sometimes.* R. V., *once. Darkness.* See John 1. 4. *Now are ye.* R. V., *are now. Light in the Lord.* "It was in virtue of their fellowship with Christ that this new apprehension of things came to them, transforming their lives." *Salmond. Walk as children of light.* Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven. Matt. 5. 16. That ye may become blameless and harmless,

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
1025 East Anaheim Street

children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world. Phil. 2. 15.

9. This verse is marked as parenthetical in the Revised Version. *Fruit of the Spirit.* R. V., *fruit of the light.* The fruit of the light is in all goodness. The result of the light is shown in all goodness.

10. *Proving.* This agrees with *ye,* the subject understood of *walk* in verse 8. *Acceptable.* R. V., *well-pleasing.*

11. *The unfruitful works of darkness.* See Gal. 5. 19–21. *Reprove.* R. V., *even reprove.* R. V., margin, *convict.*

12. *It is a shame even to speak of.* This clause is placed at the end of the sentence in the Revised Version.

13. *That are reproved.* R. V., *when they are reproved. Whatsoever doth make manifest.* R. V., *everything that is made manifest. For everything that is made manifest is light.* "That which is evil avoids the light, and loves darkness better than light, but none the less is brought to the light and appears in its own light. John 3. 20, 21. The truth is embodied in another form in the parable of the Tares." *Vincent.* "Everything that is made manifest, illuminated, partakes of, and reflects the light, and therefore in its measure is light." *Farrar.*

14. *He saith.* God. The quotation has been taken as a combination of Isa. 60. 1; 26. 19; 53. 1; 9. 1; as a saying of Christ not recorded in the Gospels; or as a quotation from some early Christian hymn (in this case "He saith" is rendered "it says"). *He that is asleep* or that *is dead* are figurative expressions for *he that sins.*

15. R. V., *Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise.* This verse returns to verse 8 in thought.

16. *Redeeming the time.* R. V., margin, *buying up the opportunity. Because the days are evil.* "The fact that the times in which they lived were morally so corrupt was a strong reason for making every opportunity for good, which such times might offer, their own." Salmond.

17. *Wherefore.* "Because it is necessary to walk carefully." *New-Century Bible. Unwise.* R. V., *foolish. Understanding.* R. V., *understand. The will of the Lord is.* See verse 10.

18. *Drink.* R. V., *drunken. Excess.* R. V., *riot. But be filled with the Spirit.* "The contrast is not between the instruments, but between the states — between two elevated states, one due to the excitement of wine, the other to the inspiration and enlightenment of the Spirit." *Salmond.*

19. *To yourslves.* R. V., *to another.* "The allusion is to alternated verses of hymns." *Farrar. With your heart.* R. V., *in your heart.* Verses 19–21 show forth the fruits of being filled with the Spirit.

20. *Unto God and the Father.* R. V., *to God, even the Father.*

21. *Submitting.* R. V., *subjecting. In the fear of God.* R. V., *in the fear of Christ.* Not thirst for power, but submission to those in rightful authority, should characterize Christians.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

16. *Redeeming the time.* Better and more accurately, "buying up," or "purchasing back the opportunity." The lost opportunity may, at any rate in part, be bought back. If the Sibyl has burnt three of her nine books, she still offers

six, even if she has burnt six of them, she still has three to offer. *F. W. Farrar.*

18. *Be not drunken with wine.* Could the youth to whom the flavor of the first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when he shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and passive will; could he see my feverish eye, feverish with last night's drinking, and the feverish looking for to-night's repetition of the folly; could he but feel the body of death out of which I cry hourly with feeble outcry to be delivered, it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth, in all the pride of its mantling temptation. *Charles Lamb.*

18. *Be filled with the Spirit.* When I was a boy I used to go to the Polytechnic in London, where my favorite diversion was a diving-bell, which had seats around the rim, and which at a given time was filled with people and lowered into a tank. We used to go down deeper, deeper into the water, but not a drop came into that diving-bell, though it had no bottom and the water was quite within reach, because the bell was so full of air that though the water lusted against the air, the air lusted against the water, because the air was being pumped in all the time from the top, and the water could not do what it otherwise would do. If you are full of the Holy Ghost, the flesh life is underneath you, and though it would surge up, it is kept out. *F. B. Meyer.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

13. *All things when they are reproved are made manifest by the light.* Oriental merchants claim that their fine cloth is without a flaw by saying that it has been "judged by the sun." Such "sun-judged cloth" is held up between the would-be purchaser and the sun, and as the rays of light fall through it they may see for themselves that it can bear this severest of tests and show no blemish in warp or woof. So the light of reproof, shining through the works of darkness, makes manifest the evil that is in them.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Ephesus, the city of the Ephesians, was the capital of the Roman province which embraced the western part of the peninsula now known as Asia Minor. It was situated on the coast, nearly opposite the island of Samos.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The salutation of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians reads: "Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints that are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Because the words "at Ephesus" are not found in two of the oldest manuscripts, and in one manuscript of a later date are marked as an interpolation, many modern scholars believe that this epistle was intended, not for the Ephesian Church alone, but for a number of churches in the Roman Province of Asia, and was thus rather an Encyclical letter. It was written when Paul was a prisoner (3. 1; 4. 1; 6. 20), but whether in Cæsarea or in Rome can not be determined. If at Rome, as the majority of scholars think, its date may be early in the sixties.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

A Roman Portrait of Paul not later than the Fourth Century

For Younger Pupils. How many letters, or epistles as they are usually called, are there in the New Testament? How many of them were written by Paul? What are his letters sometimes called? (Pauline Epistles.) Paul's letters were written in the first century; how many years ago? Perhaps your parents have some family letters that were written fifty or even a hundred years ago, and they value them because they are so old. The paper on which they are written is not like ours, but it has grown very yellow with age. A letter written a hundred years ago we think very, very old, but recently letters have been found that are more than eighteen times as old. They are written in the Greek language and upon papyrus, a kind of paper made in those days from a tall rush-like plant. Some of them were written in the years that Paul wrote his letters. We do not possess the actual letters that Paul wrote, but the letters in our New Testament are translated into our language from copies of his letters. From which one of his letters is our lesson of to-day taken?

For Older Pupils. Chrysostom says that the Epistle to the Ephesians is "overflowing with lofty thoughts and doctrines." Coleridge says, "It is one of the divinest compositions of man;" and most recent scholars deem it the most profound and sublime of Paul's writings. "What gives it its peculiar majesty," notes Professor Salmond, "is the way in which it carries everything back to God Himself, His will, His eternal purpose and counsel." Twice in the text selected for our lesson to-day Paul brings out this thought, that God's will should be the criterion for all conduct.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Wherein is Riot

Drinking like Animals. The 18th verse of our lesson as translated by Luther in the German Bible reads literally; "Do not like animals drink yourselves full of wine, whence a disorderly conduct follows, but be full of the Spirit." An account given by Mr. E. I. Hart, in *The Expositor*, of what he saw when a boy in the city of Kiu Kiang, China, shows how like animals men become when they drink themselves full of wine. Some English-speaking sailors had landed and procured a number of bottles of strong drink which they took as they walked about the city. "The heat of the day and the liquid fire within soon became too much for them, and they hunted about for a place to lie down in," says Mr. Hart. "A butcher's backyard was the most convenient spot, and there I discovered them, helplessly drunk, lying like pigs upon the dirty straw heap, with more active members of the swine family occasionally

rubbing their noses against them. The entrance to the yard was filled with gaping, wondering Chinese, for they had never before seen men so beastly."

Any Excess is Vicious. "Over almost everything save our virtues, there might be written the condemnation — too much," says Dr. David Swing. The girl who drinks from six to ten glasses of soda water every day, as one girl I know is doing, the boy who is exercising himself into uselessness for anything but athletics, the woman who reads all the murders and burglaries and other crimes she can find in several daily newspapers, the man who takes such great chances in business that it amounts practically to gambling, all these are preparing for themselves a time of retribution.

In the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* there is a story which you may have read about a Merchant and a Jinn. A Jinn is the name the Arabs give to a spirit which they say is usually invisible, but which has the power to become visible and assume many different shapes. The Merchant had stopped in the shade of a grove to eat his lunch of dates, and as he ate he threw away the stones. Soon a monstrous Jinn appeared to him, sword in hand, and cried out, "Rise up that I may kill thee, as thou hast killed my son." "I kill your son!" exclaimed the frightened Merchant, "I did not know him, and never saw him." "Did you not," demanded the Jinn, "take dates out of your portmanteau, and, as you ate them, throw the stones about on both sides?" "I can not deny it," answered the Merchant. "At that time," the Jinn explained, "my son was passing by, and you threw one of the stones at his eye, which killed him; therefore I must kill you." There are many girls and boys who do not think they are doing anything especially wrong in taking the soda water or smoking the cigarette, and they may be as surprised as was this Merchant when they find out the result of their actions. They will find, however, that consequences are as unpitying as this fabled Jinn.

Evil Effects of Smoking. Among the properties of tobacco smoke are:

1. Free carbon. It is this that settles on the back part of the throat and the bronchial tubes, blackening and irritating them.

2. Ammonia. It is this that causes the dryness of the smoker's tongue and throat, which tempts so many to the use of alcoholic drinks.

3. Carbonic acid, to which are due the headache, lassitude and sleepiness that follow prolonged smoking.

4. Oil of tobacco. This contains three substances: a volatile one, which causes the disagreeable smell that so clings to the clothing of smokers; a bitter extract, to which is mainly due the nauseous taste of tobacco and its power as an emetic; and nicotine, a powerful poison which gives rise to the tremor, palpitation and paralysis that so often afflict excessive smokers.

All must acknowledge that tobacco is utterly useless to one in a normal state of health; that nature seems to have sought to guard against its use by the intense depression and sickness which it almost invariably causes at first.

But what are its more serious constitutional effects? These differ with the age of the smoker. It is universally admitted that, prior to the full maturity of the system, the smallest amount of smoking is harmful, especially in its action upon the heart. In the case of adults, careful investigators do not find it to be injurious except when used in excess; but it must be remembered that its use, like that of opium and alcohol, always tends to excess. As a rule, the amount must be steadily increased to secure the effect for which it is used.

The excessive use of tobacco gives rise to disturbance of the stomach, weakness and irritability of the heart, relaxation of the muscles, blurring of the sight, oppression of the brain, "smoker's sore throat," irritation of the bronchial surfaces of the lungs, and sometimes to paralysis. . . .

Significant but not surprising results followed an inquiry recently made into the type of boy who smokes cigarettes. A record of twenty boys in school who did not smoke and twenty who did was kept for a long period. It was found that of the cigarette smokers nineteen were older than the average in their grade, sixteen had bad manners, the deportment of eighteen and the physical condition of twelve were poor, fourteen were in bad moral and eighteen in bad mental condition; sixteen were street-loafers, and nineteen failed of promotion. Of the non-smokers none were street-loafers, only two failed of promotion, and in all the other mentioned particulars the record shows no more than two who could be classed with the smokers. Street-loafing, bad manners, poor scholarship and cigarette-smoking seem to go together. *Youth's Companion.*

II Walk as Children of Light

Hang out your Lights. Ye were once darkness but are now light in the Lord, says Paul to the Ephesians; they were once pagans, but now they are Christians. Ye are the light of the world, said Christ to His disciples. Walk as children of light, says Paul; a city set on a hill can not be hid, said Christ. The Ephesians and the disciples of Christ were Christians, and as Christians they were lights and light-bearers to others; they were counselled to walk as children of light, to show by their behavior that they were the children of God, to let their light shine so that others would be led through their lesser lights to the Light of the World. In early times in England lighted lanterns were hung in some of the church steeples at night, and others were put out in front of the dwelling-houses. "Hang out your lights," the watchman cried, and this is the cry of Paul: Hang out your lights, let the world know by your actions that you are a follower of Christ and are seeking to do what is well-pleasing to God.

If in those olden times a householder hung out his lantern but did not light it, that lantern was as effective in guiding a traveler along the road as are many in these days who have taken the name of Christian but fail to let their lights shine. They may believe in Christ, may even have noble purposes and high aspirations, but if their lives show it not, if no one would know by their actions that they are children of light, they not only are making no impression on the world, but they are not standing the test of a Christian life. A follower of Christ who is not making his presence felt for good is a failure. Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot.

"To give light and save life," is the inscription on the Eddystone lighthouse. This would be a good motto for every Christian.

Fruit Bearing. The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, says Paul. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be My disciples. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing, said Christ. Fruit is the test of the Christian life. If we would bear much fruit we must abide in Christ.

An African chief told the missionary who came to his tribe that their words

about God seemed good, but they were like eggs and he would wait and see how they hatched out. After he had watched the lives of the missionaries for a time he declared that the eggs had hatched out well, and he was ready to believe the message the missionaries brought him.

A Chinese student in the University of Peking, who was studying English under Professor King, purchased a New Testament with the English and Chinese printed in parallel columns. "I want to study the Bible," he said, "because Professor King is so different from the Chinese teachers. He seems to love his pupils. He sympathizes with them, never becomes impatient when they are stupid, and his conduct and language show that he possesses something that I never knew a Chinese teacher to possess, and I do not know where he gets it unless from the Bible."

III Sing and make Melody with your Heart to the Lord

Joy is the Grace we say to God. One of the things which Paul says he will do who looks carefully how he walks, not as unwise, but as wise, is to sing and make melody with his heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father. You know that a Christian should be grateful to God for all His benefits, but did you ever think that it is also the duty of a Christian to be joyful, to make melody with his heart? And yet being joyful is one way of showing our gratitude, of uttering our thanksgiving, or saying our grace, as Jean Ingelow has beautifully expressed it in this stanza:

Take Joy home,
And make a place in thy great heart for her,
And give her time to grow, and cherish her;
Then will she come and oft will sing to thee,
When thou art working in the furrows; aye,
Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.
It is a comely fashion to be glad:
Joy is the grace we say to God.

"It's part of my religion to look well after the cheerfulness of life," said Louisa M. Alcott, "and let the dismals shift for themselves, believing with good Sir Thomas Moore that it is wise to be 'merrie in God.' If we also made this a part of our religion, both to look after the cheerfulness of life and to let the dismals shift for themselves, what a very different world this would be! Paul tells the Ephesians to prove what is well-pleasing unto the Lord, not to be foolish but to understand what the will of the Lord is, and in this connection he tells them that it is the will of the Lord that they make melody with their heart to Him. "We may always be sure that whatever we are doing," says Ruskin, "we can not be pleasing to God if we are not happy ourselves."

Happiness is a Gift to God. "Once upon a time," said Darrel, "a weary traveler came to the gate of Heaven, seeking entrance.

"'What hast thou in thy heart?' said the good St. Peter.

"'The record o' great suffering an' many prayers,' said the poor man. 'I pray thee now, give me the happiness o' Heaven.'

"'Good man, we have none to spare,' said the Keeper. 'Heaven hath no happiness but that men bring. It is a gift to God and comes not from Him,

Would ye take o' that we have an' bring nothing here? Nay, go back to thy toil an' fill thy heart with happiness, an' bring it to me overflowing. Then shalt thou know the joy o' paradise. Remember, God giveth counsel, but not happiness.'" *Irving Bacheller.*

Apostles of Cheerfulness. "I have been told," says Southey, "of the Spaniard who always put on spectacles when about to eat cherries, in order that the fruit might look larger and more tempting." There are many Americans who put on spectacles to look at their troubles and misfortunes, and gaze through the wrong end of a telescope to look at their joys and blessings. Do you?

Robert Louis Stevenson was an apostle of cheerfulness who always made the best of whatever happened. When he was slowly recovering from a dangerous hemorrhage he suffered also from a severe attack of sciatica, and then to his afflictions was added that of Egyptian ophthalmia, caused by the dust of the street. Suffering acutely, unable to see or to speak, he yet remained cheery through it all. When the doctor first announced the ophthalmia, Mrs. Stevenson felt that this was too much, and going to another room "sat and gloomed" as she expressed it. Being called by a bell to her husband's room, she exclaimed bitterly, "Well, I suppose that this is the very best thing that could have happened!"

"Why, how odd!" wrote Stevenson on a piece of paper, "I was just going to say those very words." Here is a Prayer of his, that was fulfilled in his own life:—

Give us to awake with smiles,
Give us to labor smiling;
As the sun brightens the world,
So let our loving kindness
Make bright this house of our habitation.

SENTENCE SERMONS

A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues. *Cicero.*

A happy man or woman is a radiating focus of good-will; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. *Robert Louis Stevenson.*

Cigarette-smoking boys are like wormy apples — they drop long before harvest time. *David Starr Jordan.*

The boy who can not kill off a bad habit, must live with it till it kills him. *Youth's Companion.*

I do not know of any surer way for a young man to put himself on the wrong track of success, than to get himself into the habit of cigarette smoking, taking an occasional glass, and playing slot machines. *John Wanamaker.*

The cigarette is doing more harm to boys than saloons: out of one thousand five hundred boys under my care, ninety-two per cent. of them were cigarette smokers when convicted, and eighty-five per cent. of them so addicted to their use as to be classed as cigarette fiends. *George Torrance, Ex-Superintendent of the Illinois State Reformatory.*

The statement that one thousand five hundred and thirty-two tons of cigarettes were exported from Egypt in one year suggests the thought that in the time of

Moses and Pharaoh the world was spared such afflictions as this; then the plagues of Egypt were kept at home. *Youth's Companion.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

What fruit then had ye at that time in the days whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. Rom. 6. 21.

While ye have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. John 12. 36.

For ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 1 Thess. 5. 5.

The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Rom. 13. 12.

Let the word of God dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col. 3. 16, 17.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

In a letter to a friend, the mother of Goethe explained her philosophy of life: "I never seek out the thorns. I grasp at the small pleasure about me. If the doors are too low, I stoop. If I can lift the stone out of my way I do it, but if it is too heavy I go around it. Thus there is no day that does not bring me something to enjoy, and the greatest thing of all — faith in God — keeps my heart light and my face joyful." This is good philosophy for me to learn and practise.

"Why should I join the church and profess Christianity; am I not as good a man as A, who belongs to the church and rents his store for a saloon, or as B, another church member who gambles in stocks?" Who has not heard similar reasons given by those who condemn Christianity because some who profess it do not bear the fruits of Christianity. Is it possible that anything I am doing is a stumbling-block to others?

It has been said that one industrious man's odd moments are worth more than an idle man's all day. The biographers of John Wesley have all wondered at the vast amount of work he accomplished, but they give as one of his maxims: "Never be unemployed, and never be triflingly employed." Is my time well spent, or do I need to heed Paul's warning about redeeming the time?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

In the Christian community at Ephesus there were Gentiles who had not become Christians, and Paul warns the Christians against the dangerous teachings of the latter; they must not be deceived by empty words, words in which there was no truth. Perhaps the non-Christians had represented that the Christians were too severe in their mode of life, but Paul tells them that the wrath of God, divine retribution, is sure to fall upon those who disobey Him. The Christians must not share in the evil life, must not go back to the dark-

ness in which they once lived, for now they had become enlightened through their fellowship with Christ and are themselves light, let them walk as becomes children of light (for the results of the light are seen in goodness and righteousness and truth), proving by their life what is well-pleasing to the Lord, judging what they may do and what they may not do by the question, "Does it please God?" Again Paul urges them to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (in Romans 6. 21, 22 he explains that the works of darkness are barren, but the works of light are fruit). Not only should Christians keep from such works, but they must reprove them, for though these things are shameful even to speak of, they must be openly reproved and shown in their true nature, because all things when reproved are laid bare and become light and lose the nature of darkness. Wherefore God said, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee;" awake from the condition of sin in which the non-Christians are, and then Christ shall shine upon them and save them.

Returning to his exhortation in regard to the Christian life, Paul admonishes them to look carefully how they walk, to walk like wise men, not like unwise men. The days in which they live are morally evil, and they must redeem the time, make use of every opportunity for fulfilling their Christian duty, letting the will of God be their guide. One particular thing to be avoided Paul now mentions, the abuse of wine; instead of being excited by wine, let them be inspired by the Spirit, so that they will break out in hymns of praise and gratitude and joy, both with words and in the silence of their hearts, unto God in the name of Jesus Christ. Let them not be self-seeking but be subject one to another in the fear of Christ.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Submission to those in authority.
2. The criterion for all conduct.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review the two lessons about Samuel studied last year. (1 Sam. 3. 1–21; 7. 1–13.) 2. Of what special sins were his sons guilty? (1 Sam. 8. 3.) 3. What motives led the people to ask for a king? (See verses 1, 3, 20.) 4. What arguments can you give against their having a king? 5. What arguments can you give for their having one? 6. Who had appointed the judges? (Judges 2. 16.) 7. Who appointed the first king? (1 Sam. 10. 1, 24.) 8. Were the kings as divinely appointed as were the judges? 9. How had the government under a king been foretold and rules in regard to him been given in Deut. 17. 14–18? 10. What was the condition of the people at this time? (1 Sam. 9. 16; 10. 5; 13. 19–21). 11. Where did Saul have his throne according to 1 Sam. 22. 6? 12. When do we first hear of runners before a royal person? (2 Sam. 15. 1; 1 Kings 1. 5.) 13. What is said of Solomon's possessions in 1 Kings 4. 21–28? 14. How did Solomon secure his workmen who prepared the materials for the temple? (See 1 Kings 5. 13–18.) 15. What is said in 1 Kings 12. 4 about Solomon's reign? 16. Tell the story of the way in which King Ahab secured Naboth's vineyard, and Elijah's denunciation of him. (1 Kings 21. 7–29.)

THIRD QUARTER

LESSON I — JULY 5

ISRAEL ASKS FOR A KING

I Sam. 8. (Read Deut. 17. 14–20.) Commit vv. 19, 20.

Golden Text

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. Prov. 8. 15.

LESSON TEXT I. Sam. 8. 10–22

10 And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots.

12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers.

14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even* the best *of them,* and give *them* to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord.

22 And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

10. *The words of the Lord.* R. V., *the words of Jehovah.* See verses 6–9.

11. *The manner of the king.* See Deut. 17. 14–17. The way in which an Eastern king maintains his courtly state. "The picture very clearly describes the court of the kings of a later time, especially in Northern Israel, while it has little application to Saul." *Budde. For himself.* R. V., *unto him.*

12. *He will appoint him captains over thousands.* R. V., *he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands. Of thousands and of fifties.* "This

represents the whole army in all its grade between these highest and lowest positions." *Schaff. And will set them to ear his ground.* R. V., *and he will set some to plow his ground.* Shakespeare speaks of letting them go "To *ear* the land that hath some hope to grow."

13. *Confectionaries. R. V., perfumers.*

14. *He will take your fields.* See 1 Kings 21. 7–16; and Ezek. 46. 18.

16. *He will take your men-servants.* See 1 Kings 5. 13–18. *Young men* R. V., margin, *The Septuagint has "herds."* Compare the way in which man servant and maid servant, ox and ass, are coupled in the tenth commandment

17. *Sheep.* R. V., *flocks.*

18. *Ye shall cry out in that day because of your king.* "This was exactly fulfilled in the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam, which was caused by the grievous burdens to which they had been subjected." 1 Kings 12. 4. *Speaker's Commentary. The Lord will not hear you.* R. V., *Jehovah will not answer you.*

19. *Nevertheless.* R. V., *But. Obey.* R. V., *hearken unto.*

20. *Fight our battles.* Compare 12. 12.

21. *He rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord.* R. V., *of Jehovah.* He brought the matter again before God in prayer. *Rehearse* comes from an Old French word, *rehercier,* meaning to *harrow over again.*

22. *The Lord.* R. V., *Jehovah.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

10. *The people that asked of him a king.* The imposing greatness of Samuel's character is seen in the results of his work. He found his people in the deepest national degradation, politically and religiously, and left them on the eve of the most splendid era in their history,— the age of their widest dominion as a nation, and of their greatest glory as worshippers of Jehovah. In him began the long, illustrious roll of the prophets, with their earnest, practical enforcement of a religion of the heart and life, in distinction from mere outward rite. In the schools of the prophets which he established, we have the germs of a higher ministry than any ceremonial priesthood. From his day, in spite of the splendor of the tabernacle or temple worship under David or Solomon, the priest took the second place in the religious forces of the nation. *Cunningham Geikie, Old Testament Characters.*

22. *Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.* We have arrived at that crisis in Israel's history when the first shock occurred in her national life. That shock was bereft of part of its violence by the wisdom of a single man. By the lustre of his personal character, by his institutions, and by his timely concessions, Samuel won that highest of all privileges which can be given to a mortal — the power of saving his country. He did not achieve the best conceivable; but he secured the best possible. The conceivable best was, that there should have been no shock at all, that Israel's elders should calmly have insisted on a reformation of abuses: that they should have come to Samuel, and demanded reparation for the insulted majesty of Hebrew law in the persons of the young judges, his sons, who had dared to dishonor it. This would have been the first best. The second best was the best practicable — that the shock should be made as light as possible; that Samuel should still control the destinies of his country, select the new king, and modify the turbu-

PALESTINE
in the Time of
DAVID AND SOLOMON
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
(or Great Sea)
PHENICIANS
Sidon
Sarepta
Tyre
Mt. Lebanon
Anti Lebanon
Damascus
Mt. Hermon
Dan
Abel
Kedesh
Waters of Merom
Hazor
ASHER
NAPATALI
Accho
MANASSEH
(Beyond Jordan)
Argob
Sea of Chinnereth
Aphek
ZEBULON
Mt. Carmel
Hammath
Mt. Tabor
Shunem
Dor
Megiddo
ISSACHAR
Mt. Gilboa
Beth-shean
GAD
Jabesh Gilead
Mahanaim?
MANASSEH
Shechem
Mt. Gerizim
Shiloh
Mt. Gilead
AMMONITES
Rabbath Ammon
Joppa
EPHRAIM
DAN
Bethel
Bethhoron
Ai
Michmash
Gibeon
Jericho
Ekron
Gezer
BENJAMIN
Jerusalem
Gilgal
Abel Shittim
Mt. Nebo
Heshbon
Ashdod
Bethlehem
Ashkelon
Gath
Adullam
Keilah
REUBEN
JUDAH
Hebron
Dead Sea
(Salt Sea)
Dibon
Gaza
Ziklag
Gerar
Engedi
PHILISTINES
Beersheba
SIMEON
WILDERNESS OF JUDEA
MOABITES
Kir Moab
Tamar
River of Egypt
Bozrah
EDOMITES
Sela
ARABIAN DESERT
Red Sea
Ezion-Geber
Elath
THE M.-N. WORKS.
COPYRIGHT, 1907, BY
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

lence of excess. So that Israel was in the position of a boat which has been borne down a swift stream into the very suction of the rapids. The best would be that she should be put back; but if it be too late for this, then the best is that there should be in her a strong arm and a steady eye to keep her head straight. And thus it was with Israel. She plunged down the fall madly, rashly, wickedly; but under Samuel's control, steadily. *F. W. Robertson.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *They shall run before his chariots.* Chariots are not now used, but in Persia it is to this day a piece of state for the king and other great personages to have two hundred men run on foot before and beside them as they ride on horseback. This they do even when the rider puts his horse to a gallop. The men are trained to their business from boyhood; and the feats they are able to perform would scarcely be considered credible in this country. They are called *shatirs.* Chardin mentions a candidate for the place of shatir to the king, who accomplished about one hundred and twenty miles by fourteen hours' unremitted running, and who was rather censured for not having done it in twelve hours. As a general rule, it is understood that an accomplished footman ought to remain untired as long as his master's horse. *Kitto.*

Running Footmen

13. *He will take your daughters to be perfumers.* The use of perfumes was very widespread. They were prepared by men or women perfumers from various oils and unguents. Those which were burned in the temple were prepared by the priests themselves. *Edmond Stapfer.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

This diagram represents the section of Palestine west from the northern end of the Dead Sea and the lower course of the Jordan. Here are shown the chief places mentioned in the life of Samuel. At Ramah Samuel had his home. As judge he visited Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. To Ramah the elders came with their demand for a king. Samuel's words of our lesson were probably spoken at Ramah, to these elders as the representatives of the people, but perhaps at one of the gatherings of the people at Mizpah. See I Sam. 7.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Again we turn to the Old Testament, taking up the Book of Samuel where we left it last December. In our study of the first nine books of the Bible last year, we saw God's chosen people ruled successively by patriarchs, priests, and judges. Now we take up the period of the monarchy, and follow the thrilling events of the United Kingdom under the successive rules of Saul, David, and Solomon.

In the first seven chapters of 1 Samuel, Samuel's birth, service in the temple, vision, and his call to be a prophet are narrated, and then follow accounts of the capture of the ark in battle by the Philistines (when the two sons of Eli the priest perished and the news occasioned the death of Eli himself), of the afflictions that came to the Philistine cities to which the ark was brought, and of its return with presents to the Israelites at Beth-shemesh, whence it was taken to Kirjath-jearim and left in the care of Eleazar of the house of Abinadab. Samuel took the place of Eli, and during the succeeding years led the people to give up their false gods and return to the worship of Jehovah.

For a long time Samuel, the greatest of all the judges, ruled in peace. But the Philistines again troubled the Israelites, and the latter felt the need of a King to fight their battles, for Samuel's sons, whom he had appointed as judges, were corrupt, and Samuel himself was getting old. The elders came to Samuel and demanded that he choose a king to rule them. The date may be in the last half of the eleventh century, B. C.

In our lesson for to-day Samuel is shown as bitterly hostile to the idea of having a king, and as being told by God that the demand for a king was a rejection of Him, their supreme King. In the next chapter, verse 16, we read that God said to Samuel: "To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon my people, because their cry has come unto me." In the eighth chapter Samuel seems to yield to the popular demand only because he must; in the ninth he seems to be God's agent in bringing about the institution of the monarchy because he was far-seeing enough to realize that the only hope of success against the Philistines and other enemies lay in the union of all the tribes in a permanent government with a king at the head. Much has been written in regard to Samuel's attitude toward the monarchy. The selection given on page 274 from the pen of Dr. Robertson expresses the belief that the establishment of the monarchy was forced upon Samuel. The belief that Samuel's hostility to the movement was only the representation of a later writer who had seen the abuses of kingly power is thus expressed by Professor Charles Foster Kent in his *History of the Hebrew People:* "The language in which Samuel condemns it is almost a literal description of the abuses of the royal prerogative under such kings as Solomon and Ahab. It is not difficult to see why the later prophets regarded the kingship as a mistake. Anything good in itself, if abused, becomes an evil. Later kings certainly did misuse their opportunities and introduced that orientalism which was such a deadly menace to the pure worship of Jehovah. In the age of Samuel the kingship represented a great step forward, for thereby the Hebrews emerged from anarchy into a state of order. The later Hebrew prophets (as their other writings demonstrate) had not only seen objectively illustrated

the evils of the kingship, but they had also caught glimpses of that ideal theocracy which in the light of the teaching of the prophets and of Jesus we know as the Kingdom of God in which the supreme authority is the will of the Highest."

While there was need of a strong centralized government, not all the reasons which the people gave for having a king were good, and the self-willed manner of demanding the change was reprehensible. Whatever his first attitude toward the monarchy, Samuel was undoubtedly led by God to establish it, at the people's request, and to warn them against expecting that the mere appointment of a king would end all their troubles.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In what part of the Bible were our lessons during all last year? What was the last book we studied? What did we learn about the life of Samuel? (Review the two lessons about Samuel. See "The Historical Background.")

For Older Pupils. (See "The Historical Background.") The passing of Samuel is told in our first three lessons of this quarter. He still remains judge, and has many years before him of active service for Israel to whose best welfare he is wholly devoted, but above him a king is stationed to go out before the people to fight their battles. To a few men like Gladstone, "The Grand Old Man," it is given to labor almost till the last moment of a long life with strength of mind and of body unabated, but to almost every man who lives long a pathetic moment comes when he is made to realize that his best work is over, that a younger and abler man is wanted to fill the place he has held so long. That moment has come to Samuel, it is a very bitter potion he must drink, but in this crisis of personal and national affairs he shows the true nobility of his character.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I By Me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice

God ordains the Power to fit the People. Saul in Israel, Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, Nero in Rome, William the Silent in Holland, Philip II in Spain, Washington and Lincoln in America — all the powers that be, or have been, were ordained of God. And yet in every case the forces that have created them, and the causes that have exalted them, are to be sought in the character of the nations over which they have ruled. God ordains the power, but He ordains it to fit the people. A bandit-chief for a tribe of brigands, a tyrant for slaves, an inquisitor for bigots, a liberator for a race of freemen. The ruler is but the exponent of the inmost thoughts, desires, and ambitions of the ruled; sometimes their punishment, and sometimes their reward. *Henry van Dyke, Essays in Application.*

The Divine Right of Democracy. It is true that at any given time people are most likely to be contented, peaceful, and happy under the rulers who actually give them the most firm, orderly, and equitable government, no matter how they may have been selected. There is a certain amount of hard common sense in the remark of Alexander Pope, although it was made in verse:

"For form of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered is best."

But the wisdom of this couplet is confined to the present tense. It is only good for the moment in which it is uttered. A form of government may be well administered to-day, badly to-morrow. The great question is, how to secure a continuity of good administration. How shall the men who are best qualified to control and direct the common interests of their fellow-men be discovered? How shall they be sanctioned in the use of just authority, and restrained from the exercise of unjust tyranny?

The democratic method intrusts the selection of the ruling classes to the collective reason and justice of the people. Now where these three essentials exist,—a representative and equal suffrage, periodical opportunity for the people to change their rulers peacefully, and a careful limitation of official powers by the constitution,—there is genuine democracy. . . .

All that may be said of the propriety of appealing to Providence and trusting God for the ordaining of the powers that be, applies to the democratic method even more than to any other. Why should we suppose that Providence has anything more to do with the ambition of a strong man to climb a throne, than with the desire of a great people to make a strong man their leader? . . . The characteristic of democracy, says James Russell Lowell, is its habit of "asking the Powers that Be, at the most inconvenient moment, whether they are the Powers that Ought to Be." And what is the question but an appeal to the divine judgment and law?

There is as much room for Providence to act in the growth of public opinion as in the rise and propagation of a royal house. What royal house is there that goes so far to vindicate the ways of God to man as the succession of Presidents chosen by the people of the American Republic? Some of the choices have not been brilliant, a few have been unfortunate, none has been evil or corrupt. There is no line of hereditary kings, no line of autocratic emperors, that claims as many great men, or half as many good men, in an equal period of time, as the line of Presidents of the United States.

There is warrant, then, in reason and in experience, for believing in the divine right of democracy. It is not the only righteous and lawful method of selecting rulers, but it is the highest and most reasonable. We lift our patriotism above the shallow and flashy enthusiasm for institutions merely because they are ours. We confide ourselves to the hopeful and progressive view of human nature, to the faith that God is able to make truth and right reason prevail in the arena of public opinion. *Henry van Dyke, Essays in Application.*

II Following the Fashion

Like Other Nations. "Nay; but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations," is one of the reasons given by the people of Israel for their demand. Had the heathen nations round perhaps taunted them because they had no king to lead them forth to battle? Were the Israelites perhaps ashamed of their uniqueness under the theocracy? "What will others say?" is a question very often thought of in these days, and one that we see considered in Bible times as well. "When you are in Rome do as the Romans do" is a modern saying, but not a modern thought.

Duty is a personal matter. Conscience is a personal monitor. That others

do it is never an excuse for any wrong deed. Never be "a slave to the Great They Say."

Fear of Others. Singularity is not to be affected for singularity's sake; but neither are we to conform to fashion simply because it is fashion. How cruel often are its behests! The Chinese girl has to submit to her feet being bandaged and confined till walking becomes a living torture. The women of Lake Nyassa insert a piece of stone in their upper lip, enlarging it from time to time till speaking and eating become most awkward and painful operations, and the very lip sometimes is torn away. Can any one truly respect himself who says, "I do this, not because I think it right, not even because I deem it for my interest, but simply because it is done by the generality of people"? Can any one justify himself before God, if the honest utterance of his heart must be, "I take this course, not because I deem it well-pleasing in Thy sight, but because if I did otherwise, men would laugh at me and despise me"? The very statement of the case condemns it. Not less is it condemned by the noble conduct of those who have withstood the voice of the multitude and stood up faithfully for truth and duty. Was there ever a nobler attitude than that of Caleb, when he withstood the clamor of the other spies, and followed the Lord fully? or that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when alone among myriads they refused to bow down to the image of gold? or that of Luther when, alone against the world, he held unflinchingly by his convictions of truth? *W. Robertson Nicoll,* in *Expositor's Bible.*

Good Counsel. This truth is for the school boy in his school, tempted to swear and cheat because the other boys do. It is for the young man or woman in the boarding-house, crowded upon by the low atmosphere of gossip and frivolity which is hot and heavy there. It is for the shop-keeper shut in by the bad tricks and habits of his trade. It is for the men and women of society, for the students and the lawyers and the ministers; for the mechanics and the laborers; for every human creature who is tempted to slight his work and not do and be his best. To all such comes the call, "Be better than the world! Break through the slavery of your class and time and set. Enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God." *Phillips Brooks.*

III Shirking Responsibility

A King to fight their Battles. Another reason given by the people for wanting a king was that he might fight their battles; they would shift to his shoulders all their own responsibility for success or failure with their enemies. This, like their desire to be like the nations round them, to be in the fashion, is a common failing still. Some one to fight our battles, some one to decide our difficulties, some one to advise us whether to pursue this course or that, some one to tell us whether this act is right or that act wrong,—who has not wished for such a guide? But how fortunate for us that we can not have our lives regulated for us by an infallible, earthly guide! Were it possible for a youth to go through life with such a monitor always at hand, his will and his conscience would become useless through disuse, and he would be morally and spiritually as weak as the oyster crab that spends its life in the protecting shell of an oyster. The blessing of life's schooling comes in the power that is developed through struggle.

The Evil of Irresponsibility. Mr. Alfred B. Wallace in *Travels on the*

Amazon, has a most instructive passage on the real evil of slavery. Speaking of a slave owner who treated his slaves well, he says that the slaves were as happy as children; they had no cares and no wants, they were attended to in sickness and old age, amusements were provided for them, and they were better off than many a free man. "But," continues the traveler, "looking at it in this, its most favorable light, can we say that slavery is good or justifiable? Can it be right to keep a number of our fellow-creatures in a state of adult infancy — of unthinking childhood? It is the responsibility and self-dependence of manhood that call forth the highest powers and energies of our race. It is the struggle for existence, the battle of life, which exercises the moral faculties and calls forth the latent sparks of genius." The essential evil of the system of slavery is, then, that it destroys in the slave the sense of responsibility. It is quite true that socialism and slavery are systems far apart; but if socialism should relieve us of the necessity to reflect, to watch, to provide, to strive, it will just so far act inimically as slavery does. The sense of personal right, responsibility, obligation, has made England, Germany, and America, and they would soon be unmade if any power or organization whatever were to assume our burden of citizenship. *W. L. Watkinson.*

The Effect of Responsibility. In a far western town a number of years ago, it was well known that the Democratic candidate for re-election as mayor had not only mismanaged the public funds but had by "graft" enriched his own coffers through his office. That the Republican candidate would do the same if elected, was also well known. A number of citizens were discussing the situation in a store when one of them exclaimed: "Let us put up an independent candidate; let us run this worthless, drunken youth here for the office." The young man mentioned was very rarely seen sober, and was then so intoxicated that he could not comprehend what was being said. The thought of giving such a lesson to the two parties, proving that in their opinion a worthless drunkard was better than the rascals on the regular tickets, "took" in the community, and the drunkard was duly elected. The inn-keeper aroused him one night from his stupor and succeeded in convincing him that he was the mayor of the town. From that moment he never took another drop of liquor, and devoted himself to the task thrust upon him with marvelous energy and honesty and ability. He received counsel from the wisest men in town, he worked early and late, he examined into all the crooked dealings, and cut down the public expenses by half without interfering in any way with the town's best interest. Responsibility made a new man of him.

SENTENCE SERMONS

It is no sin to be singular. *David James Burrell.*

Faith in God is indispensable to successful statesmanship. *Abraham Lincoln.*

Against all the petty tyrannies of fashion, or of foolish public opinion, our Christian faith ought to be fighting for our emancipation. *W. R. Richards.*

The burden of public life is ours, and we are cowards and criminals if we attempt to shirk it. *W. L. Watkinson.*

The possession of unlimited power will make a despot of almost any man: there is a possible Nero in the gentlest human creature that walks. *Thomas Bailey Aldrich.*

Young men, accept responsibility; attach yourself by pledges to every good

institution — political, social, literary, and religious; be grateful to the Angel of Responsibility that urges you with swift steps along the highways that lead to happiness and usefulness and character. *N. D. Hillis.*

Our country hath a gospel of her own
To preach and practise before all the world,—
The freedom and divinity of man,
The glorious claims of human brotherhood,
And the soul's fealty to none but God. *James Russell Lowell.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

For what great nation is there, that hath a god so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is when we call upon him? Deut. 4. 7.

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Rom. 13. 1.

He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. . . . But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassador after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us. Luke 19. 12, 14.

Be ye not stiffnecked as your fathers were; but yield yourselves unto Jehovah. 2 Chron. 30. 8.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

What am I doing that is not worth doing, or even that is wrong to do, merely because others do it? Is my desire to be "in the fashion" greater than my desire to be in the right?

Wherein lies my temptation? What king would I enthrone?

"When you can talk to God, when you can really tell Him what is in your heart, then you have found religion;" says Dr. van Dyke, "for religion is nothing else than a living tie, a channel of vital intercourse between God and man." The way in which Samuel met this hard place in his life by taking the matter in prayer to God is a lesson for me; I, too, may take all my troubles to the same Helper.

"Nay; but we will have a king over us," said the people to Samuel. The great wrong of these people lay not so much in their wanting a king as in the way in which they demanded one. It was the sin of self-will, their will they were determined to have in opposition to that of Samuel their prophet and judge who interpreted to them the will of Jehovah. We are reminded of their descendants who demanded the death of Christ, and in their determination to have their own will said to Pilate, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Whatever the consequences, they were determined to have their own way and be ruled by a king. The warfare of every Christian life is that between his own self-will and the will of God. Do I gain the victory in my battles by defeating my self-will? I will strive to be more loyal to the immediate sovereignty of God's will in my daily life.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

When Samuel was old, he made his sons, Joel and Abijah, judges over

Israel at Beersheba. Unlike their father, who was upright in all his ways, they took bribes and perverted justice. The elders of Israel came to Samuel at Ramah and told him that because he was old and his sons were evil he must make them a king to judge them, that they might be like all the nations. Samuel was displeased by their demand, and laid the matter before God in prayer. "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not be King over them," was God's answer. "Hearken unto them, but first show them the manner of the king that shall rule over them." Samuel told God's words to the people, and gave them a vivid picture of the tyranny of an oriental despot. He will make their sons drivers of chariots, horsemen and runners, military officers, cultivators of his estates, artificers of weapons of warfare and of the furnishings of his chariots; he will make their daughters perfumers and cooks and bakers for the royal kitchens; the best of their fields and vineyards and oliveyards will be seized and given to the king's servants; he will demand heavy taxes, a tenth of their produce and their flocks, in order to enrich himself and his officers; their slaves and their cattle will be pressed into the royal service; they themselves, some of them, will be made slaves to lend dignity to the royal court; and when because of the tyranny of their king they cry to God for relief, they must abide by the consequences of what they brought upon themselves.

This glowing picture did not cause the people to withdraw their demand. "Nay, but we will have a king over us," they cried; they will submit to anything if they only may have a king like that of all the other nations, who will be their highest judge, and will lead them to battle against their foes. Again Samuel asked God's guidance and was directed to listen to the demand of the people. He sent them back to their homes, probably with a promise that he would do their bidding and choose for them a king.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The evils of Nepotism.
2. Character is not inherited.
3. "The Dead Line."
4. God controls this world and yet men have freedom of choice.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Tell the story of the first meeting of Samuel with Saul. (Chapter 9.) 2. How did Saul receive Samuel's announcement that he was to be king? (1 Sam. 9. 21.) 3. How did he receive his election? (1 Sam. 10. 22.) 4. Do you think he was modest or was he shrinking from responsibility? 5. How did he respond to the first call to lead his people to battle? (1 Sam. 11. 7.) 6. How did the tribe of Benjamin compare with the other tribes in size? (1 Sam. 9. 21.) 7. Why was it wise that the king should come from a small tribe? (Rivalry between Ephraim and Judah, the largest tribes, was prevented.) 8. What earlier event happened at Mizpah? (1 Sam. 7. 5, 12.) 9. How is it said in 1 Sam. 28. 6 that the Lord was wont to speak to the people? 10. What instances of Samuel's taking his difficulties to God in prayer are recorded in the first nine chapters of first Samuel? 11. What traits of character are shown by Samuel in the first two lessons?

LESSON II — JULY 12

SAUL CHOSEN KING

I Sam. 9; 10. (Read I Sam. 11.) Commit v. 24.

Golden Text

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. II Sam. 23. 3.

LESSON TEXT I Sam. 10. 17–27

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh:
18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you:
19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations: and ye have said unto him, *Nay,* but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.
20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.
21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.
22 Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.
23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.
24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.
25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.
26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.
27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

17. *The Lord.* R. V., *Jehovah.* And again in verses 18, 19, 22, 24, 25. *Mizpeh.* R. V., *Mizpah.* Verses 17–19 are a recapitulation of 1 Sam. 8. 7, 8.

18. *The Lord God.* R. V., *Jehovah the God. All kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you.* R. V., *all the kingdoms that oppressed you.* The Philistines, Moabites, Midianites, and others.

19. *Adversities and tribulations.* R. V., *calamities and distresses. Thousands.* Synonymous with "families."

20. *And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near.* R. V., *So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near. Were taken.* "The tech-

nical term for selection by sacred lot; the procedure in the case of Achan Joshua 7. 16–18 forms a close parallel." *Kennedy.*

21. *When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near.* R. V., *And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near. Of Matri.* R. V., *of the Matrites.* The lot was by tribes, families (clans), and persons: it is thought that a line has been omitted; the Septuagint Version adds, "and he brought the family of the Matrites near man by man." *And when.* R. V., *but when.*

22. *They enquired of the Lord further.* R. V., *they asked of Jehovah further.* They sought to know God's will through Samuel the prophet, or by means of the Urim and Thummin in the breast-plate upon the high priest's ephod. See Ex. 28. 30; Num. 27. 21; 1 Sam. 28. 6. *If the man should come thither.* R. V., *Is there yet a man to come hither? The stuff.* R. V., *the baggage.*

24. *God save the King.* R. V., *Long live the King.*

25. *The manner of the kingdom.* "A charter establishing and defining the position of the king in relation to Jehovah, and to the people. It must be distinguished from 'the manner of the king' in 8. 11. In substance, at any rate, it probably resembled the law of the king in Deut. 17. 14–20." *Kirkpatrick. Laid it up before the Lord.* This has been taken to mean that it was placed by the side of the ark with the copy of "the book of the law." See Deut. 17. 18–20; 31. 26. "It would be ready for reference if either king or people violated the 'law of the kingdom.'"

26. *Home.* R. V., *to his house. A band of men.* R. V., *the host.* R. V. margin, *men of valor.*

27. *The children of Belial.* R. V., *certain worthless fellows. No present.* A token of homage. See 1 Kings 10. 25; 2 Chron. 17. 5.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

23. *He was higher than any of the people from his shoulders upward.* In the Mussulman traditions this is the only trait of Saul which has been preserved; his name has there been almost lost,—he is known only as *Thalut,* "the tall one." In the Hebrew songs of his own time he was known by a more endearing but less expressive indication of the same grace. His stately, towering form, standing under the pomegranate tree above the precipice of Migron, or on the pointed crags of Michmash, or on the rocks of Engedi, claimed for him the title of the "Wild roe, the gazelle," perched aloft, "the pride and glory of Israel." (2 Sam. 1. 19.) Against the giant Philistines a giant king was needed. The time for the little stripling of the house of Jesse was close at hand, but was not yet come. Saul and Jonathan, "swifter than eagles and stronger than lions," still seemed the fittest champions of Israel. "When Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man he took him unto him." (1 Sam. 14. 52.) He, in his gigantic panoply, that would fit none but himself, with the spear that he had in his hand, of the same form and fashion as the spear of Goliath, was a host in himself. *Stanley, Jewish Church.*

24. *The King.* The first king in such a monarchy had a position of extreme difficulty. It was totally unlike anything hitherto known. While in name the chief magistrate, it was only in subordination to the supreme will of the invisible King, Jehovah, expressed through specially commissioned prophets. On every side the royal power was limited and directed by the authority of men who had no political office in the state. It was almost inevitable that the first

experiment should be a failure. Everything was new, untried, strange. The first reign was at best only an attempt to set the new kingship at work in its singular subordination to theocratic principles. But it served a great end: for if Saul had not thrown light on the demands and conditions of the new monarchy, there could have been no David. He was only the step by which the latter mounted to his throne, safe through the failures of his predecessor. *Cunningham Geikie, Old Testament Characters.*

26. *And Saul also went to his house to Gibeah.* Saul's residence, like that of the ancient Judges, is still at the seat of the family. That beacon-like cone, conspicuous amongst the uplands of Benjamin, then and still known by the name of "the Hill" (Gibeah) had been selected apparently by his ancestor Jehiel, for the foundation of one of the chief cities in Benjamin. (1 Chron. 8. 29; 9. 35.) There Saul had "his house," and his name superseded the more ancient title of the city as derived from the tribe. Formerly Gibeah of Benjamin, henceforth Gibeah of Saul, down to the time of Josephus. And there, king as he was, we might fancy ourselves still in the days of Shamgar or of Gideon, when we see him following his herd of oxen in the field, and driving them home at close of the day up the steep ascent of the city. *Dean Stanley.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

20. *The tribe of Benjamin was taken.* We are not told the way in which the tribe, and then the family, and then the individual, was selected. Important matters, we know, were often decided by lot. In the 33d verse of the 16th chapter of Proverbs we are told that

> The lot is cast into the lap;
> But the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah.

It is thought that the "lap" here stands for the "bason" of an urn or vase. In our study of the earlier portions of the Bible we learned that the scapegoat was chosen by lot (Lev. 16. 8); the location of the several tribes in Canaan was settled by lot (Num. 33. 54); the trespass of Achan was discovered in the same way (Josh. 7. 14–21).

23. *When he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.* Stature and strength were regarded in ancient times as belonging of right to royalty. "The prevalence of the feeling of regard for personal bulk and stature is seen in the sculptures of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Persia, and even in the modern paintings of Persia, in which the sovereign is invested with gigantic proportions in comparison with persons around him," says Kitto. Emperor William of Germany seems to share in this feeling. His photographs are taken in such a way as to heighten his stature, and no photo has ever been taken of him standing by the side of the empress, for she is taller than he.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The name *Mizpah* meant "watch tower," and it was given to several "lofty places" in Palestine whence one could see far over the country. The Mizpah where Samuel called a meeting of the people was in the tribe of Benjamin. See the diagram in the last lesson. The place now called Neby Samwil is the traditional site; here a Crusaders' Church, now in ruins, is said to have been built

over the tomb of Samuel. The name *Gibeah* meant hill, and it, also, was given to several places. Gibeah, Saul's home, was in the tribe of Benjamin not far from Ramah.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There was a "goodly young man" named Saul,—of the house of Kish, the least of the families of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest of the tribes of Israel,—who, in search of his father's lost asses came to Samuel the seer. Under divine guidance Samuel recognized him as the one whom he should anoint leader of the people. He told Saul that the asses had been found, and invited him to a public feast and had him remain overnight as an honored guest. In the morning Samuel accompanied him on his way and anointed him, telling him that the Lord had anointed him to be prince over his inheritance, and giving him several "signs" of the divine approval, all of which came to pass that day—by Rachel's tomb two men met him and told him the asses were found and his father was anxious about him; by the oak of Tabor three men on their way to sacrifice at Bethel shared their food with him; farther on a band of prophets met him and he prophesied among them, greatly to the surprise of all who knew him.

In thought our lesson to-day follows very closely that of last Sunday. It is impossible to assign definite dates to lessons in these last two quarters. If Saul reigned forty years, 1050 to 1010 B. C. may be given as the limits of his reign, though Ussher gives earlier dates and many modern scholars give later dates. Various estimates of the length of Saul's reign are held.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you ever have to do anything that you do not want to do? Do you think there is any one who does not have to do things against his will? There are various ways of doing such things. How do you do yours, promptly, willingly, cheerfully? In *Adam Bede,* George Eliot makes Lisbeth say: "It's the right thing to be done. An' what's liking got to do wi' t?" There is scarcely a day comes that does not bring with it some duty to be done that we do not like to do, but it is the right thing to be done, and what then, in truth, has our liking to do with it? Our liking has nothing to do with it; but the way in which we do it has everything to do with it, for we do not deserve any credit for doing what we must do if we do it unwillingly, ungraciously, but we do deserve credit for doing what we must do if we do it cheerfully. Last Sunday we saw how an unpleasant duty was thrust upon Samuel, and how he learned that it was the right thing to be done because God willed it. To-day let us see in what sort of a spirit he did it. (Relate the story of chapter 9, and verses 1, 6–8 of chapter 10, and emphasize Samuel's generous treatment of Saul at his feast.)

For Older Pupils.

"The common problem: yours, mine, every one's
Is, not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be—but finding first
What may be, then find out how to make it fair
Up to our means; a very different thing,"

is a much needed lesson which Browning teaches. If we can keep from fancying what were fair in life provided it could be, if we can banish all discontent that comes from longing for the impossible, and can resolutely face conditions in our life which are not to be altered, and exert our utmost endeavor to make the best possible out of these conditions, then we are making, not marring our lives, doing all that God meant us to do with them.

This lesson Samuel had learned. We see to-day how he accepts the change in his own and in the nation's life which at first he would have had otherwise, and makes the best possible of the situation; we shall see later how, when the king disappointed him, instead of mourning long over what might have been he anointed as second king a man "after God's own heart."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I He that ruleth over Men must be Just, ruling in the Fear of God

Saul's Failure. As we see Saul in our lesson to-day he shows several noble traits of character. He hides among the baggage for he has been anointed by Samuel and told that he is God's choice for the king, and it must be that he is very modest and unassuming and shrinks from the honor put upon him. When some "worthless fellows" bring him no present as is expected, and thus show that they "despise him," he "holds his peace;" in no way does he show that he resents such treatment. In the next chapter he shows fearless courage and promptness in attacking the enemy, and when the victory is won and the people in their gratitude would put to death the men that had opposed him, Saul shows his magnanimous spirit: "There shall not a man be put to death this day," he declares, "for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel." As we follow him in his history, however, we shall see that the fair promise of a just reign lived in the fear of God is not fulfilled. His self-will asserts itself, and the closing years of his life are sadly tragic; we read only of jealousy and anger, melancholy and remorse, madness and suicide. Our Golden Text tells us how men should rule, not how the first king of the Israelites did rule.

Perfect Justice. Aristides had such a reputation for integrity and justice at Athens that when Themistocles told the Athenians he had a plan which would greatly benefit the city, only it must not be made public, they directed him to tell it to Aristides and they would abide by his decision. The plan was to seize the ships of the other Greeks and make themselves masters of the sea. "Nothing could be more profitable, but nothing more unjust, than the measure proposed by Themistocles," was Aristides' report, and the Athenians promptly rejected the plan without knowing what it was.

During the Civil War a private soldier knocked down his captain and was sentenced to the Dry Tortugas, a group of coral keys in the Gulf of Mexico where a penal settlement had been established. His friends induced Judge Scholfield to intercede for him with President Lincoln. The President listened to the Judge's plea, and then spoke: "I tell you, Judge, you go right down to the Capitol, and get Congress to pass an act authorizing a private soldier to knock down his captain. Then come back here, and I will pardon your man." Judge Scholfield did not argue the question further.

Progress in Just Legislation. The world's sense of equity, its desire to

act fairly and render to every man his due, is expressed most directly in its laws. Who can fail to see a process of improvement in the spirit and temper of legislation, a conscientious effort to make the law more efficient in the protection of human rights and more just in the punishment of offenders? . . .

The world has been learning to discriminate more carefully between the degrees of crime. In the eighteenth century men were condemned to death for forgery; for stealing from a shop to the value of five shillings or from a house to the value of forty shillings; for malicious injury to trees, cattle or fish-ponds; for the cutting of hop-bands from the poles in a plantation. Within eighty years capital punishment has been inflicted in England for sheep-stealing and for robbery from a house. The laws of Pennsylvania at the time of the Revolution enumerated twenty crimes punishable with death; in Virginia and Kentucky there were twenty-seven. Modern legislation recognizes the futility as well as the fundamental injustice of such crass and indiscriminate retribution, and reserves the final penalty for the supreme crime against the life of the individual or the State.

At the same time there has been a two-fold rectification of the scope of the criminal law. Some of the offenses most severely punished in olden times have ceased to be grounds of prosecution: for example, heresy, witchcraft, religious nonconformity. On the other hand, misdeeds which formerly were disregarded have been made punishable. It was not until 1833 that the English law began to treat drunkenness as a crime, rather than a misfortune. In 1857 a fraud on the part of a trustee, and in 1875 the falsification of accounts, were declared to be criminal. The laws of various states are recognizing and defining a vast number of new misdemeanors, such as the adulteration of foods, gambling, violation of laws in restraint of the liquor traffic, selling cigarettes to children, tapping electric wires, disfiguring the landscape with advertisements, or printing them on the American flag, making combinations in restraint of trade. *Henry van Dyke, Essays in Application.*

II Making the Best of the Inevitable

Samuel's Example. A king would not only take away much of Samuel's own authority, but, as it seemed to Samuel at first, to have a king was to reject God Himself. A weaker and less noble man would have said to the people: "Very well, if you are determined to take things into your own hands and have your own way despite my warnings, I shall leave you to your own resources. Do what you will. As for myself, I will retire to Ramah." And then he might have watched the people try to establish a new kind of government, all the time secretly rejoicing over their failures and troubles, or even openly reminding them, "I told you so." When Jonah had prophesied the destruction of Nineveh, and because of the people's repentance his prediction was not fulfilled, he built himself a booth and sat sullenly under it, "requesting for himself that he might die, and saying 'it is better for me to die than live.'"

Very different was Samuel's conduct. When he became convinced that the people were not to be dissuaded, and that it was God's will that they should have a king, he submitted whole-heartedly to the inevitable. He chose the king; and did not regard him as a rival but treated him generously. When first he saw him he invited him to a feast, bade him go before him as of greater importance than himself, gave him the position of honor at table and had the

choice portion placed before him. When he presented him to the people he said enthusiastically, "See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" A patriotic and self-sacrificing man was Samuel.

The Lesson the Dandelion taught. A young artist who longed to travel and see wonderful scenes that she might perpetuate them with her skilful brush, was forced to stay at home because of lack of means and of the necessity of supporting her parents. Instead of gazing at Italian skies and Swiss mountains, she could only look out from her basement studio upon three stone steps leading to a neighboring house. One day she looked and exclaimed, "Here is something I do not have to travel abroad to see!" and rapidly she sketched what she saw, the stone wall, the three rough stone steps, and there in a cranny a sturdy dandelion with its green leaves and three rigorous flowers seemingly growing out of the stone itself. She called her picture *Making the Best of it*, and into many homes it brought the lesson it had brought to her, for every one who saw it ordered a copy.

Making the Best of Things may be Cowardly. There is a making the best of things that is noble. It is high philosophy, it is holy resignation and contentment, it is bravely greeting the inevitable. Paul knew its secret, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." But there is a making the best of things that is false and shameful. It is labeling that as best which we deeply know is not the best. It is cowardly contentment. It is "letting things go," in weak complaisance, or shallow optimism, when they could be bettered, if we cared to better them. We have no right to make the best of anything that can in any way be made better. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

III Bringing Difficulties to God in Prayer

Live a Life of Prayer. Samuel as a child had been "given to the Lord" by his mother, and we are told that when still a lad "the Lord was with Samuel" and "The Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh." All his life he had communed with God and served God, and now when this crisis in national affairs came his first thought was to ask God what he should do. In some way he was made conscious that he was working together with God for the best interests of His chosen people, that God sympathized with him in his trial, that the people in demanding a king had not rejected him but had rejected God that He should not be King over them, but that it was best to yield to the people's wishes and let them have their earthly king.

The distinguished German philosopher, Fichte, once discussed prayer with Baron von Kottwitz. The child must pray, declared Fichte, but he, a grown man, saw no need of it for himself, his part was to will and to do. "Do you not agree with me?" he questioned, and the Baron answered simply. "When I awake in the morning," he said; "and think of all the duties that I must fulfill during the day, and then think how weak I am, and how often I fail in patience and love and wisdom, I can not do otherwise, I must ask my Heavenly Father to help me! And when at night I lie down to sleep and think of all that I have failed to do or have done wrongly, then I can not sleep peacefully until I have asked my Heavenly Father to forgive me." "I wish I felt as you do," Fichte answered. Not long afterwards the philosopher died, and when his will was read it was learned that he had made Baron von Kottwitz the guardian of

his only child. Fichte had never seen the Baron save on this one occasion, but so great was the impression made on him by this interview that he could think of no one to whom he would rather entrust his son than the man who lived in such close communion with God whom he himself had not learned to love.

The great heroes of the Bible have all lived in close communion with God, and to Him they have brought their joys and sorrows. Jesus Himself lived a life of prayer. Whether alone on the mountain side or in the midst of the curious throng at Lazarus' grave, He lifted His heart in prayer to the Father, and was strengthened for the task or the torture before Him.

What Good does it do to pray? It is true that a great advantage of prayer is the effect of the prayer on the pray-er, but it is my firm conviction that if a man finally settles down to the conclusion that the only advantage in prayer is reflex, that the whole scope of prayer practically is within the realm of one's own personality, very soon he will stop praying altogether, or prayer in his case will degenerate into a mere soliloquy. The teaching of Jesus is that over against us there is not an impassive, unmoved Spectator called God, but a living, loving Father. Years ago I heard Henry Ward Beecher say that God was sometimes represented as a great Chinese mandarin fanned by breezes of adoration from every side, who Himself sat unmoved and impassive. Such is not a true conception of God given us by Jesus Christ. If you know anything from experience of a father's love, then you begin to approach Jesus' conception of the way in which God feels when He sees men rising up in intensity of spirit to ask something of Him — their Father.

In the light of that thought listen to these fundamental and important words of Jesus. They state His theory of prayer. "What man is there of you who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone? or if he shall ask for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father" — now make that personal — "your Father which is in heaven give good gifts unto His children." *Edward I. Bosworth,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

What to pray for. Do not pray for easy lives! Pray to be stronger men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks! Then the doing of your work will be no miracle. But you will be a miracle. Every day you will wonder at yourself, at the richness of the life which has come into you by the grace of God. *Phillips Brooks.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Common sense bows to the inevitable and makes use of it. *Wendell Phillips.*

If you were born to honor show it now;
If put upon you, make the judgment good
That thought you worthy of it. *Shakespeare.*

There is no good in arguing with the inevitable; the only argument available with an east wind is to put on your overcoat. *James Russell Lowell.*

Why seek to set your little will
Against the wise, divine decree?
Why not prove good the seeming ill,
And yield with grace to what must be? *Harriet M. Mills.*

Remember that thou wast a bondsman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee. *Words hung over the writing-desk of John Newton.*

Live with God, and all things shall be His servants, and work together for our good and make the best of us. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Forget not all the sunshine of the way
By which the Lord hath led thee. *F. R. Havergal.*

For a magistrate to be weak is to be wicked. *Wm. M. Taylor.*

Often does it happen that a man who is engaged in the noblest work needs to be reminded that the cause for which he is laboring is holier than himself. *Henry van Dyke.*

It is the man who prays who believes in prayer, and who testifies to its reality and power, and he is the only man who has the right to bear any witness. *Charles S. Macfarland.*

It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period a great, nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted sense of justice and benevolence. *Washington.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our law-giver, Jehovah is our king; He will save us. Isa. 33. 22.

It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help. Where now is thy king, that he may save thee in all thy cities? And thy judges, of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken him away in my wrath. Hos. 13. 9–11.

For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,
And his ears unto their supplications. 1 Pet. 3. 12.

Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain. Ex. 18. 21.

Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah. 6. 6, 8.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

A ruler should be just, ruling in the fear of God, and so should every one be just in his dealings with others, living in the fear of God.

A wise preacher has said that to make the best of things in the right way is to let things make the best of us. Samuel did this: he made the best of this crisis in national affairs in the right way, by nobly doing all he could to help carry out what must be though he did not like it, and thereby bringing out the best that was in him, magnanimity, generosity, greatness of spirit that rises above all that is envious and revengeful and petty. It is one thing to submit to the inevitable because we must; it is quite another thing to submit graciously and let the inevitable make the best of us.

Samuel took all his difficulties to God in prayer and received comfort in trouble, counsel as to what was his duty, and strength to do that duty in the right spirit. Do I have such a prayer-life? Do I tell all things to God, and am I conscious that He hears and answers in His own best way? Is prayer a habit or only an occasional act with me?

"This is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us." Instead of seeking to have my own will, I will seek more earnestly to know what is my Father's will for me.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Samuel called the people together at Mizpah, and after reminding them that God had delivered them as a people in former days from the oppression of the Egyptians and of other kingdoms, but they were rejecting Him in demanding a king, He conducted the selection, probably by lot, of the king as in the very presence of the Lord. First the tribe of Benjamin was selected from among all the tribes, then the family of the Matrites, and the house of Kish, and at last Saul himself. When they looked for Saul he had disappeared. They found him hidden among the baggage and brought him forth, and it was seen that he was a head taller than the rest, and this, they thought, was fitting in one who was to be their king. "See him whom the Lord has chosen," said Samuel, "there is none like him among all the people," and the people raised the shout that has been oft repeated down the ages, "Long live the King!"

Samuel drew up a sort of constitution, which probably declared what were the powers and restrictions of the king, and his relation to them and to Jehovah, and he wrote it in a book that was carefully kept. The people were sent home. Saul was escorted homeward by those who accepted him as the king chosen by God. There were certain worthless fellows, however, who said derisively, "How shall this man save us!" And they showed their refusal to acknowledge him as their king by omitting to send him a present. The king showed his good sense and right spirit by paying no heed to them.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Eternal good citizenship is the price of good government. *Elihu Root.*

2. The youth says: "Drinking is a bad habit, but give me another glass." So our intelligence says, "All cities should be governed by great men, but for the present bring on your thieves." *David Swing.*

3. "Public office is a public trust." The discharge of duty to one's fellowmen, the work of resisting violence and maintaining order and righting the wrongs of the oppressed, is higher and holier than the following of visions. The service of man is the best worship of God. *Henry van Dyke.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What is said about justice of rulers in Num. 23. 6–8? 2. On what occasion did Moses declare that he had not taken one ass? (Num. 16. 15.) 3. Why are the ox and the ass especially mentioned by Samuel and also in the 10th commandment? (They were the most valuable possessions of a pastoral and agricultural people.) 4. Who told Jesus that if he had wrongfully exacted aught of any man, he would restore fourfold? (Luke 19. 8.) 5. What is the law given in Num. 35. 31 against taking a ransom for a murder? 6. For what purpose was Samuel's miraculous sign? 7. What does Prov. 26. 1 tell about rain in harvest time? 8. What was the secret of Samuel's influence over the people? 9. What is said in Deut. 7. 6–11 about God's choice of Israel?

LESSON III — JULY 19

SAMUEL WARNS SAUL AND THE PEOPLE

I Sam. 12. 1–5, 13–25. (Read I Sam. 12.) Commit vv. 23, 24.

Golden Text

Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart, for consider how great things he has done for you. I Sam. 12. 24.

LESSON TEXT I Sam. 12. 1–5, 13–25

1 And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.
2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and gray-headed; and, behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.
3 Behold, here I *am:* witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you.
4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.
5 And he said unto them, The Lord *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.
13 Now therefore, behold the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired! and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you.
14 If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord; then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God:
15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord; then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.
16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes.
17 *Is it* not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.
18 So Samuel called unto the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.
19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.
20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart;
21 And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain *things,* which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain.
22 For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.
23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:
24 Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you.
25 But if ye shall do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *I have harkened unto you.* Compare 8. 7, 9, 22. 2. *The king walketh before you.* They have a visible king, in the stead of their invisible Guide. *My sons are with you.* Various explanations may be given for this remark: by mentioning his age and his sons he refers to the reasons given for wishing a king, (1 Sam. 8. 5); the sons are mature men and they prove that their father is advancing in years; he is about to abdicate his position as judge, he bespeaks their kind treatment of his sons, who have been his assistants. *From my childhood.* R. V., *from my youth.* See 1 Sam. 2. 18, when his service began. Budde suggests this to be the thought: the king you will find out later, but me you have known well for a long time.

3. *Behold.* Omitted in R. V., *The Lord.* R. V., *Jehovah. His anointed.* Saul. *Ox, ass.* The most valuable possessions of the people, who were farmers and shepherds. *Received any bribe.* R. V., *taken a ransom.* "The technical term for blood-money paid to the relatives of a murdered man — the *wergeld* of the Germanic races — which was strictly forbidden by Hebrew law. (Num. 35. 31.) Here it denotes the bribe offered to a judge to induce him to acquit the murderer." *Kennedy. To blind my eyes therewith.* R. V., margin, *that I should hide mine eyes at him.*

4. *Ought.* R. V., *aught.*

5. *Answered.* R. V., *said.*

13. *Ye have desired.* R. V., *Ye have asked for.*

14. R. V., *If ye will fear Jehovah, and serve him, and hearken unto his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of Jehovah, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of Jehovah your God, well.* In the Greek this sentence is a rhetorical figure, and the conclusion of the conditional clause, represented in English by "well," is understood but not expressed. See Ex. 32. 32 for a similar example.

15. *Obey.* R. V., *hearken. Shall the hand of the Lord.* R. V., *will the hand of Jehovah. As it was against your fathers.* See verse 9.

16. *Stand.* R. V., *stand still.*

17. *He shall send.* R. V., *that he may send. Thunder and rain.* Wheat harvest was in May or June, when no rain fell. See Prov. 26. 1. *Ye may perceive.* R. V., *ye shall know.*

18. Compare Ex. 14. 31.

20. *Ye have done all this wickedness.* R. V., *ye have indeed done all this evil.*

21. *Should ye.* R. V., *would ye. Vain things.* Idols.

22. *For his great name's sake.* "Jehovah is jealous of his glory." *Terry. His people.* R. V., *a people unto himself.*

23. *God forbid.* R. V., *far be it from me. Pray for you.* "Samuel divests himself of his authority as Jehovah's representative in the theocracy, reserving only the privilege of being his people's intercessor." *Kennedy. I will teach you the good.* R. V., *I will instruct you in the good.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

3. *His anointed.* Saul was the first of the long succession of Jewish kings. His was the first recorded instance of inauguration by that singular ceremonial

which, in imitation of the Jewish rite, has ascended to the coronation of our own sovereigns. The sacred oil was used for his ordination as for a priest. He was the "Lord's Anointed" in a peculiar sense, that invested his person with a special sanctity. And from him the name of "the Anointed One" was handed on till it received in the latest days of the Jewish Church its very highest application, — in Hebrew, or Aramaic, the Messiah; in Greek, the Christ. *Stanley.*

19. *We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.* Then Samuel speaks; we have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord, and all shall still be right. It is as if he had said, The grand question is not under what particular form of government you live, but upon your loyalty to God and His righteousness. Be true to Him, and you shall flourish under this or any form of government, you shall be brought through every difficulty and change of national life into that ultimate glorious condition promised to your fathers. "Only fear the Lord," and then "fear not." Did not our Lord teach us that everything in human life depends upon the religious idea — that the knowledge and service of God constitute the one grand question which decides all other questions? Did not our Master say, with a fullness and eloquence all His own: only fear the Lord, and all, all shall be well? Throughout His whole ministry Christ kept severely to this. *W. L. Watkinson, Addresses.*

22. *It hath pleased Jehovah to make you a people unto himself.* More even than the Hebrew people have the American people been favored by God, their land is richer, their history more splendid. Never in the world's history has there been a hundred years more remarkable than our hundred years; never an empire ready-made handed over to the people, prepared therefor; never a growth in wealth and in population, comparable to the growth which has taken place on this continent within the last hundred years. We are an elect people of God. We have received, preëminently, His blessings, His gifts, and shine with His glory. *Lyman Abbott, Problems of Life.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *Here I am: witness against me.* The phrase is the one generally used of a witness who testifies to a crime. The questions Samuel asks all refer to judicial honesty, which has always been rare in the East. Frequent enactments and exhortations in the Old Testament testify to the venality of the judges in Israel. *Henry Preserved Smith.*

3. *Of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith?* To a casual observer of oriental life, the prevailing official corruption is something appalling. To the close inquirer it seems indigenous and inevitable. To the true servant of Jehovah it was appalling, but neither inherent nor necessary.

The common Hebrew word for a "bribe" is, properly speaking, a "present," and is used of the propitiatory gifts sent to a superior in order to secure his protection (1 Kings 15. 19; 2 Kings 16. 8), or by one who seeks to evade deserved punishment (Prov. 6. 35; 21. 14). Presents are the ordinary preliminaries of visits and negotiations, their motive and effect naturally come to be the influencing of the beneficiary (Prov. 17. 8; 18. 16). Citations of instances from oriental or biblical history would simply overcrowd my pages. We shall only cite Jacob's gift to Esau (Gen. 32. 13; 33. 10; 43. 11; 1 Sam. 10. 27; Psa. 95. 12) and the present of Mero-dach-faloden to Hezekiah (Isa. 39. 1). In general Semitic history we may go back some hundreds of years, and in the casually

disclosed correspondence of the El Amarna tablets the business is seen to be quite overdone. The annals of the Assyrian kings fairly swarm with instances. It is, therefore, the most natural thing in the world to send a present to a judge before a case comes up for hearing; though publicity was, of course, not desirable in the transaction (Prov. 21. 14), and was usually avoided, as a suggestive proverb informs us (Prov. 17. 23).

The evil, indeed, was dealt with by the lawgiver of the ancient code, and that in the most reasonable and persuasive fashion: "Thou shalt take no bribe; for a bribe blindeth those that have sight, and perverteth the cause of the righteous." (Ex. 23. 8; Deut. 16. 19.) Yet the abuse was prevalent in the time of the Judges. In spite of the noble record and example of Samuel, his sons, judges by his own appointment, became notoriously venal. (1 Sam. 8. 1.) Samuel's protest and challenge on his own behalf (1 Sam. 12. 3) were of themselves an indication that his virtues were rare. *James Frederick McCurdy, History, Prophecy and the Monuments.*

17. *Is it not wheat harvest?* Rain in Palestine at wheat harvest is almost unheard of. In the twenty-two years between 1860 and 1882 in Jerusalem, no rain fell on any day in June, July, and August; but one day in four years in September and but three days in two years in May. *Budde.*

As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest,
So honor is not seemly for a fool. Prov. 26. 1.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Saul was inaugurated king at Gilgal, five miles from Jericho, the first camping ground of the Israelites after they crossed the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua to take possession of the Promised Land. After the sacrifices on the occasion of the "renewal of the kingdom" in connection with Saul's inauguration, Samuel spoke to the people the words of our lesson.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An opportunity soon came to Saul to prove his power. The Ammonites under their king Nahash — the Serpent — had long troubled the eastern tribes, and now they laid siege to the town of Jabesh in Gilead. The people were ready to surrender, but Nahash's condition was that the right eyes of all should be put out. Josephus explains that in battle the shield covered the left eye and thus they would be rendered incapable of warfare. The people asked for seven days' respite, and sent messengers to "all the borders of Israel" telling of their plight. Saul, who had gone back to his customary labor, learned the tidings as he came with his oxen from the field. "The Spirit of God came mightily upon him." He killed his oxen and sent pieces throughout the country with the message that "Whoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." The warriors responded to his call and with a great army he crossed the Jordan, relieved the beleaguered fortress, and utterly routed the enemy. This masterful battle aroused the people to a perception of Saul's prowess, and they wished to put to death those "worthless fellows" who had not been willing at first to accept him as their king, but Saul would not allow this. "There shall not a man be put to death this day," he declared, "for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel."

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In a song that Scotsmen sing there is this stanza: —

O, Menie, the heart that is true
Has something more costly that gear;
Ilk e'en it has naething to rue,
Ilk morn it has naething to fear.

About what Old Testament hero have we been studying whose heart we know was so true that he had nothing to regret at night and nothing to fear in the morning? His heart was true because he lived in the fear of God. He tried to have his people live in the same way, but they often turned aside from his teaching. What is the last thing the people have done which displeased Samuel? Why did their asking for a king seem evil to him? He feared they would rely wholly on their visible king and forget their invisible God who had been till now their only King. Why did he yield to their wishes? Whom did he choose for their king? How did Saul differ in appearance from the people? Once more Samuel called a meeting of the people, this time at Gilgal, to warn them that they and their king must remain loyal to God. His warning will make a greater impression upon them, he thinks, if they remember that he who utters the warning has himself always been loyal to God. Conscious that he has nothing to rue, he asks them about his record. What was his first question?

For Older Pupils. Though in our lesson to-day we see Samuel giving up his official position as judge of Israel, he retained his spiritual leadership for long years to come. "I will instruct you in the good and right way," he promised them. Samuel is the connecting link between the judges and the kings. He is himself the last of the judges and the first of that long line of prophets who curbed the despotic power of the kings. He established a theological seminary ("a college for prophets") at Ramah; others were later found at Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and elsewhere. As Moses was the great legislator and founder of the priestly rule, so Samuel was the great reformer and organizer of the prophetical order.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Whom have I Defrauded?

Thou hast not defrauded us. "It is better always to be incapable of cheating and lying than to be capable of chivalrously laying down one's life in some great stress of duty," said Phillips Brooks. Samuel proved himself a man incapable of the one and capable of the other. He always had the welfare of his people at heart and was ready to scrifice himself for them; he had never defrauded them nor taken a bribe.

During the war a paper written by Quartermaster-General Montgomery C. Meigs was brought to General Sherman. He examined it long and carefully without being able to read it, and then endorsed it in this way: "I heartily concur in the recommendation of the Quartermaster-General, but I don't know what he says." He did know that officer was a man who could be trusted. It ought to be true that one who has taken upon himself the name of Christian is one who can be trusted, one of whose integrity there can be no question.

When Mark Twain's publishing house failed, owing a debt of over $200,000,

the humorist considered the debt a personal one. "The law recognizes no mortgage on a man's brain, and a merchant who has given up all he has may take advantage of the laws of insolvency, and start free again for himself;" he said, "but I am not a business man, and honor is a harder master than the law. It can not compromise for less than a hundred cents on the dollar, and its debts never outlaw." After several years of hard brain work Mr. Clemens paid off every cent of the indebtedness.

A man induced his friends to put their money into a manufacturing concern that quickly failed. He spent twelve years of the hardest kind of labor and deprivation to amass sufficient money to return to them what they had lost in the venture. The friends refused to accept the money and told him that his sense of honor was Quixotic, but he said nothing could restore his self-respect and give him greater happiness than to pay what he considered his debts, and he had his way.

An old soldier recently asked to have his name dropped from the pension list. He had been receiving a pension because suffering from a supposed incurable disease contracted by exposure in the army, but he had recovered and was no longer entitled to the pension. The Pension Bureau at Washington was so astonished that a special agent was sent out to see if the man were not insane. In all these cases the world wondered at such integrity, but did each do more than, in strict honesty, was right?

A Caution. Remember always that honesty can never be unilateral. Do not attack the poor man who is dishonest, or the rich man who is dishonest, as a member of a class; attack him simply because he is dishonest; wage war relentlessly on every man of wealth who does what is wrong; attack in every way the iniquity of the corporation which commits iniquity. But remember, you men of education, you men of college training, you to whom we have a right to look for leadership in the generation now taking up its burdens, that you do the greatest possible wrong if you train people to an obliqueness of vision which shall make them condemn wealth, instead of condemning crooked wealth; which shall make them fail to see that the real test is honesty as against dishonesty. Condemn the rich man who corrupts a legislature; condemn equally the demagogue who seeks to incite one set of our citizens against another because that other in the material things of this world is more fortunately off. *Theodore Roosevelt.*

II Only fear the Lord

What it means to fear God. When we profoundly fear a thing we are haunted by it. It affects everything. It throws a shadow into the sunniest hour, and brings a chill into the gayest feast. May we transfer any of this meaning into our interpretation of the fear of God? To fear God is to be God-haunted, God-possessed. But immediately we see the defectiveness of the figure. In all fruitful fear of God there is no cringing, no slavishness, no paralyzing terror. Perfect love casteth out this type of fear. Let us, then, change our figure. We speak of being haunted by an air of music. We have listened to some sweet melody, and we can not escape from its gracious thraldom. It pervades the entire day. We hear it in our work and in our leisure; when we retire to rest and when we awake. It haunts us. The analogy may help us to some apprehension of what is meant by the fear of God. The man who fears

God is haunted by God's presence. God is an abiding consciousness. God is "continually before him." Everything is seen in relationship to God. The divine Presence pervades the mind and shapes and colors the judgment. Here are two descriptions from the Word of God, in the contrast of which the meaning will be made quite plain. "God is not in all his thoughts." The Eternal does not haunt his mind. Everything is secularized, and nothing is referred to the arbitrament of the divine will. He is not God-possessed. "Pray without ceasing." Here is the contrasted mind from which the sense of God is never absent. Like an air of penetrating music the divine pervades the exercise of all his powers. He is God-haunted, and in the consciousness of that Presence he lives and moves and has his being. He fears God. *J. H. Jowett, Brooks by the Traveler's Way.*

A Guiding Principle. The great scientist is he who discovers some wide-reaching law of nature which explains a thousand facts otherwise disconnected and unexplainable; the great historian is he who seizes some deep, social law which determines the development of nations through long periods; the great statesman is he who perceives some distinct, profound need of the time, and who by one wise edict brings a nation out of puzzling and threatening complications. These gifted thinkers get to the deep, underlying fact which determines so much in nature, so much in society. Men of lesser genius seek to understand things superficially, and to correct them one by one, but the masters get to the root principle, the dominant law, the prevailing tendency. Now, Samuel has reached here the deep and final law of human life—"Only fear the Lord." Strange, complicated, contradictory, baffling as life seems, there is one simple principle, one sovereign passion, one master truth, that will solve us every problem, subdue every opposition, and guide us safely through every difficulty. There are times when a man wishes to say a great deal in a few words, there is not time or opportunity for much speaking, so he condenses all into one burning sentence, and it was so here with Samuel. "Only fear the Lord." Not a thousand things to do, but one — fear the Lord; not a thousand things to do, but one — serve Him in truth.

Does any one object that such mottoes as these are vague generalities, out of which we can get little good? Only fear the Lord. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel. Does any one cavil at these sayings as if they were not definite and illuminative? When some one objected that the clauses in the American Declaration of Independence, such as "All men are equal," and so forth, were but "glittering generalities," Emerson replied that they had proved "blazing ubiquities," they had poured the light of salvation on the nation's path at great moments. So with these sayings, they have a very definite and immense significance, they are blazing ubiquities and they will throw a precious light on all the questions and interests and duties of life.

Life is often far more simple than it seems: stick to a few grand truths and promises and hopes, and you shall not be confounded. In the hours of deepest darkness and confusion be loyal to the text — only that, and nothing more. I remember once hearing a devout engine driver relate his religious experience. He said: "The other night when I was on duty there was a dense fog; we could not see a yard before us, but I knew that the permanent way was under us, and every now and then we caught a glimpse of some signal or other, and in time came safely to the journey's end; so I know if I am true to the great commandments and promises God will guide and bring me through." Remember

that the permanent way is there, be true to the line of trust on one side, and obedience on the other, and God will vouchsafe you comforting signals, and in due season bring you the appointed rest. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." *W. L. Watkinson, Noonday Addresses.*

III Praying for Others

Prayer for Others a Duty. Far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you, said Samuel. We think of prayer for others as a privilege; but Samuel regarded it as a duty; not to pray for his people was to him a sin. Was he not right? May we not be as selfish in our prayers as in our actions? He who is self-centered in his active life is self-centered in his prayer-life. He who would know the joy of living for others must know, too, the joy of praying for others. Bishop Brooks once said that in the beginning of his Christian life he felt that it was all he could do to get his own soul saved; perhaps one great reason why so many Christians do not have Bishop Brooks' later spiritual experience is that they fail to advance beyond this first stage where they are engrossed in their own needs. It is said in the book of Job that the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends.

"The sinner's own fault. So it was,
Clearly his own fault. Yet I think
My fault in part, who did not pray,
But lagged and would not lead the way,"

says Christina Rossetti. To pray for others is a privilege, and not to pray for others is a sin.

What Prayer for Others may do. We are told in Hebrews that Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Our word *intercede* is derived from two Latin words meaning *to pass between.* Christ passes between God and us, talks with God in our behalf; and we should talk with God in behalf of others. How the knowledge of what prayer may do for others, even for those whom we do not know, was brought to one young girl, a recent story shows. She had been traveling in Europe with her family, and every morning they had family prayers together before starting for their sight-seeing. In Paris they shared a sitting-room with a stranger, and this young girl had been greatly afraid the stranger would open her door some day and find them all on their knees. A few years later a stranger introduced herself to her at a social gathering, and asked her to thank her father for what he had done. "I was all alone in Paris and in great trouble," she said; "I had no one with whom to consult, and I was in desperate need of help. A little more,—a step or two,—and I should have ruined my life. Every morning your father prayed in the sitting-room. He prayed for the strangers far away from home, for the tempted ones, the lonely ones—he prayed for me. I was on my knees in my room that led off from your sitting-room. His prayers gave me strength to resist my temptation. Your father saved my life."

Dr. W. J. Dawson in speaking about the revival in Wales, said: "In one instance known to me a simple farmer and his wife unlocked the door of a humble chapel in a lonely hillside, and began there to pray for their neighbors by name, until in a fortnight, drawn by an invisible compulsion, more than fifty persons came to this unadvertised meeting and yielded themselves to Christ,"

SENTENCE SERMONS

The art of government consists in being honest. *Thomas Jefferson.*

Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth wouldst teach. *Bonar.*

It is not possible, O Athenians, that a power should be permanent which is marked with injustice, perjury, and falsehood. *Demosthenes.*

In vain we call old notions fudge,
And bend our conscience to our dealing;
The Ten Commandments will not budge,
And stealing will continue stealing. *James Russell Lowell.*

He that prayeth for another is heard for himself. *Jewish Proverb.*

For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend? *Tennyson.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God hath led thee. Deut. 8. 2.

Thou shalt not wrest justice; thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. Deut. 16. 19.

Happy is the people that is in such a case;
Yea, happy is the people whose God is Jehovah. Psa. 144. 15.

The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge. Prov. 1. 7.

I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. Eph. 1. 16.

I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men. 1 Tim. 2. 1.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

A true Christian will live in the fear of God; he will seek to live such a life as will be pleasing to Him; God will be "continually before him."

Is my sense of honor keen and true? Am I above "small dishonesties"? Do I ever defraud others in any way?

Prayer that is not perfunctory is "the soul's sincere desire." What do my prayers indicate as to my desires; do they interpret my character and show that I am selfish?

"No prayer takes hold of God until it first takes hold of you," said an eminent preacher. Prayer for others is not sincere that is not followed by service for others.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Samuel called the people together at Gilgal and there Saul was made king (and probably publicly anointed), and sacrifices and peace offerings were made to the Lord. Then in a solemn address in which he resigns his office as judge,

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street

though retaining that of prophet, the aged leader stands before the people and puts himself on trial, with Jehovah and Saul, His anointed, as judges, and asks them whom he has defrauded or oppressed, or of whom he has taken a bribe. The people emphatically approve of his administration, and Samuel reminds them that God is their witness. Next, he recounts their history as a nation, their deliverance from Egypt, their ingratitude to God for all He had done for them, and the retribution that followed their ingratitude. Pointing to their king whom they had demanded, Samuel promises that if they and their king remain true to God all will be well, but warns them that if they rebel against God's commandments they shall suffer. Then he enforces his words of warning by a miracle. It is the time of wheat harvest, when rain never falls in Palestine, and he tells them that he will ask the Lord to send rain and thunder to prove that they have done wickedly in asking for a king. In answer to his prayer rain falls and the thunder crashes, and the people believe that they are a sign from the Lord, and they believe in Samuel who has foretold their coming. They confess the wrong they have done and beg Samuel to intercede with God in their behalf. Samuel tells them not to fear, that although they have done this wrong, if they will but remain true to the Lord He will not forsake them, for they are His chosen people. He himself will never cease to pray for them, for were he to do so he would be sinning against the Lord, and he will continue to be their instructor in the right way. "Only fear the Lord and serve Him."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Ways of defrauding others. "Whenever you allow your neighbor to enter into agreements which he would refuse, did he know what you could tell, assuredly you make a tricky and degrading use of the information you possess."

2. The prophet's ethical ideal is exactly our social need at this hour. In our appalling problem of capital and labor, justice is the great consideration. In all our political endeavors, justice — fair elections, fair legisation, fair administrations, fair judicial decisions — is the one thing sought. The problem of the negro, of the immigrant, of the Indian, presents the same need. The horror of the tenements, the sad shame of the unemployed, call upon us for the same remedy. The world has never tried what could be done to make the perfect State simply by justice. *Gerald Soares.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Tell the first story in which Saul by his disobedience brought upon himself Samuel's prophecy of his losing his kingdom. (1 Sam. 13. 1–15.) 2. Tell the story of Jonathan's victory at Michmash. (1 Sam. 14. 1–15.) 3. Tell the story of Jonathan's innocent trespass and the result. (1 Sam. 14. 24–46.) 4. What were some of Saul's good qualities? 5. What evil characteristics did he display in the 13th and 15th chapters? 6. In what way were the people given a king after their own heart? (The people were self-willed in demanding a King, and Saul's striking characteristic was his self-will.) 7. In what city was this conference between Saul and Samuel held? 8. What other leader went out from this place to take a city which had been "devoted" to the Lord? 9. What is said in Joshua 6. 18, 19 in regard to the spoil of the city? 10. Who disobeyed the command and what was the punishment? (Josh. 7.)

LESSON IV — JULY 26

SAUL REJECTED BY THE LORD

I Sam. 15. (Read I Sam. 13; 14.) Commit v. 22.

Golden Text

The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. Josh. 24. 24.

LESSON TEXT I Sam. 15. 13–28

13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed *be* thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.

14 And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?

18 And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?

20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal.

22 And Samuel said, Hath the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.

26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

28 And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou.

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

13. *Blessed be thou of Jehovah.* A common form of salutation. *The commandment of Jehovah.* See verses 1–3.

14. *Bleating and lowing.* Saul had been commanded (verse 3) to slay them all.

15. *The people spared.* Saul and the people, verse 9. *Utterly destroyed.* Hebrew, *devoted.* Margin, of R. V.

16. *Stay.* Say no more. *This night.* We should say, last night.

17. *When.* R. V., *Though. Little in thine own sight.* Compare Saul's words in 1 Sam. 9. 21. The margin of the Revised Version suggests a different thought in its rendering, "Though thou be little in thine own sight (*i. e.* the people are the ones in authority and you only obey them), art thou not head of the tribes of Israel?"

18. *The sinners,* the Amalekites. Compare verse 2.

19. *Didst evil.* R. V., *didst that which was evil.*

20. *I have brought Agag the King of Amalek.* He wishes it to appear as though he had brought Agag as proof that he had utterly destroyed his people.

21. *The things which should have been utterly destroyed.* R. V., *the devoted things.*

23. *Witchcraft.* R. V. margin, *divination. Iniquity and idolatry.* R. V., *idolatry and teraphim.* Teraphim were images of some sort. Rebellion against God's will is as bad as the sin of divination by the help of evil spirits, and stubbornness is as bad as worshipping idols and household images. Compare 28. 3.

24. *I obeyed their voice.* Because Saul still places the blame upon the people, his repentance seems insincere.

26. *Jehovah hath rejected thee from being king.* Saul remained king many years longer, but from this time on he knew that the fate of his dynasty was sealed, that no son of his would be his successor.

27. *Mantle.* R. V., *robe.* Compare Ahijah's act and its interpretation to Jeroboam, 1 Kings 11. 29–31.

28. *A neighbor of thine, that is better than thou.* David. See 1 Sam. 28. 17.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

15. *The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen.* There is one thing in the order that we must not overlook, because it gave a complexion to the transaction quite different from that of ordinary massacres. That circumstance was, that the prey was to be destroyed as well as the people. In the case of an ordinary massacre, the conquering people hasten to enrich themselves by appropriating everything of value on which they can lay their hands. The Israelites were to destroy the prey just as thoroughly as they were to destroy the people. The restriction appointed to Saul, like that which Joshua had imposed at Jericho, bound the people to the most rigid self-restraint, under circumstances when self-restraint was extremely difficult. The extermination was to be carried into effect with all the solemnity of a judicial execution, and the soldiers were to have no benefit from it whatever, any more than the jailer or the hangman can have benefit from the execution of some wretched murderer. The sparing of the prey was a matter of pure greed, and the whole character of the transaction was changed. *W. R. Nicoll,* in *Expositor's Bible.*

22. *To obey is better than sacrifice.* In these great words the author of this

chapter brings to a luminous point the whole ethical teaching of the Hebrew prophets from Amos downwards. (See Amos 5. 21–24; Isa. 1. 10–17; Mic. 6. 6–8, and — the nearest in expression — Hos. 6. 6 and Jer. 7. 22.) The Old Testament has no word for "duty"; its moral ideal is embodied in the words "As the Lord commanded." Samuel's "obedience," accordingly, is but another aspect of Hosea's "mercy"—"I desire mercy (loving deeds), not sacrifice," a golden truth twice re-affirmed by our Lord Himself (Matt. 9. 13; 12. 7). "Not all the blood of beasts, On Jewish altars slain," can take the place of clean hands and a pure heart, and the love that fulfils itself in the service of our fellow men. *A. R. S. Kennedy,* in *The New Century Bible.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

15. *Devoted, utterly destroyed.* A person or a thing "devoted" was regarded as consecrated to God, and could not be reclaimed. A man or a beast must be put to death (Lev. 27. 29). In the taking of Jericho, which had been "devoted," the articles which could not be consumed by fire, such as gold and silver, were devoted to the use of the sanctuary. (Josh. 6. 24.) The spoil of the Amalekites, having been devoted to God, did not belong to the Israelites, and therefore they could not rightly offer it in sacrifice to God.

20. *I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.* Such wars, involving the innocent along with the guilty in a common destruction, are incompatible not only with the law of love, but with the idea of justice taught by the Gospel. How, it is asked, could they ever have been commanded by God? It is replied that God is the author of life and death, and that He has the right at any time to deprive any number of His creatures of life, whether by the natural instrumentality of pestilence or famine, or by the express employment of man as the instrument of destruction. But the difficulty still remains, how a nation could be convinced that it was to be the executioner of God's judgments, and how it could execute them in so terrible a way without injury to its moral consciousness. The solution is to be found in the defective oriental idea of justice. The destruction of a nation for the sin of its ancestors, or of a family for the offense of its head, was a common oriental practice. It was not repugnant to the current sense of right. This indiscriminating kind of vengeance was due to the defective sense of human individuality, the want of a true perception of the rights and responsibilities of each man as an independent being. This feeling was, no doubt, shared by the Israelites. But with them such acts were expressly prohibited as a part of ordinary judicial procedure (Deut. 24. 16), and in this respect they were on a higher level than other oriental nations. But when God saw fit by the mouth of a prophet who was recognized as His accredited messenger to enjoin the execution of such a sentence, there was no moral resistance to it. It would be accepted without hesitation as coming from God, and executed without any violation of their sense of justice. Such commands were an "accommodation" to the moral and religious state of the nation to which they were given. Revelation is progressive, and God's dealings with the chosen people, while designed to raise and elevate them, were necessarily conditioned by their moral state at any given period. It need hardly be said that such commands are inconceivable under the Gospel dispensation. *Kirkpatrick,* in *The Cambridge Bible.*

23. *Teraphim.* The teraphim were household images supposed to bring the

blessings of food, health, etc., to the home, and they seem to have been reverenced as idols and consulted oracularly. They were often in human form; some have been discovered with a human head on a brute body, and others the reverse of this. The first mention of teraphim in the Bible is in the account of Jacob's flight from his father-in-law Laban, and the latter's pursuit in search of the teraphim which his daughter Rachel had carried away. In the time of the Judges the teraphim were worshipped by an entire tribe, as told in the 17th and 18th chapters of the book of Judges. Michal, the daughter of Saul and wife of David, in order to give her husband more time to escape from the messengers sent by Saul, put the teraphim in his bed so as to make the messengers believe that David was asleep. The reverence of the teraphim together with the worship of Jehovah continued even after the return from the captivity.

Assyrian Teraphim

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Amalekites were a nomad people who lived south of Canaan. From the expedition against them Saul returned to Gilgal, where Samuel came to meet him.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As in the days of Samuel and Eli, the Philistines are still in the ascendency in the land; their supremacy is vividly shown in these words: "There was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter and his axe, and his mattock. So it came to pass in the day of battle, there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people; but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found." The first duty before Saul was to free his country and drive this enemy back to their own land along the Mediterranean coast.

Many years have passed, of which we have no record, and Jonathan, Saul's son, is a grown warrior. He successfully attacked the Philistine garrison in Geba, and this led the Philistines to assemble for war. A great multitude encamped at Michmash on the mountains of Ephraim, and from thence sent out marauding parties in several directions. The Israelites were terrified. Many hid in caves and pits, and some fled across the Jordan. Only six hundred "trembling men" followed Saul. Strong in his faith that the Lord was with

him, Jonathan, accompanied only by his armor-bearer, daringly climbed down the precipitous slope from Geba into the valley of Michmash and then up the opposite mountain side to the camp of the Philistines. His attack so confused the enemy that a panic ensued, and the Israelites under Saul were able to pursue and win a great victory. In the midst of the battle Saul declared a fast until evening, and rashly cursed any one who should disobey. Jonathan had not heard the order, and he ate honey which he found in the forest, while the people, faint with hunger, rushed ravenously upon the spoil of the Philistines after nightfall. When Saul learned of Jonathan's disobedience he declared that Jonathan should die, but the people interfered and rescued him, "for he hath wrought with God this day."

To-day's lesson treats of Saul's commission to destroy the Amalekites and his rejection from being king because of his partial disobedience. With this should be compared the account in 1 Samuel 13. 8–14, where, before the war with the Philistines, Saul offered sacrifice at Gilgal instead of waiting for Samuel as the latter had ordered, and in consequence was told by the prophet that because he had not kept the commandment of God his kingdom should not continue, but the throne should be given to a man after the Lord's own heart. Whether Saul was told by Samuel that the Lord had rejected him from being king on two different occasions, or whether these two narratives are from different writers and given to account for the estrangement between Saul and Samuel, is a subject of controversy among scholars.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Among the legends of the Middle Ages there is one about a fierce dragon that came up out of the sea and devoured men and women and children. A few brave men went to attack it, but their horses and dogs fled at the sight of the monster, from whose eyes flames shot forth, and from whose mouth floods of water poured, and they themselves were killed. The dragon was held to be invincible, and the Master of the Order of St. John forbade any knight to imperil his life in a vain attempt to slay the monster. There was one knight, however, who thought he could free the world from such a scourge. He went to a forge and made an iron dragon just like the real one, flames and all. Then he led his horse and dogs against this sham dragon again and again till they became accustomed to it, and found it harmless. When they were no longer afraid he went forth to meet and slay the real dragon. Great was the rejoicing among the people and loud were their praises of the hero. But when the knight brought the dragon's head to the Master of the Order he was met with a stern rebuke. In that Order strict obedience was regarded as the most important of all virtues, and the Master said to him: "Thou hast been disobedient. Thou hast broken thy vow of obedience to commands. No longer art thou a son of this Order." The knight hung his head in shame and humbly turned to leave, and then, the legend says, the Master called him back exclaiming with tears in his eyes: "Thou art worthy to be a Master among us, for thou hast true humility. The man who conquers his own spirit is greater than he who slays many dragons."

Saul, the king of the Israelites, was given a task to do, a fiercer enemy than this fabled dragon to conquer, and with the task a very definite command to obey. He performed his task, but disobeyed the command, and when he

was told that he had been disobedient he did not hang his head in shame like this young knight, for he had never learned to conquer his own spirit.

For Older Pupils. A German peasant who robbed and murdered his landlord was aided in the deed by the latter's servant. As he was climbing in the window the servant shoved a movable oven underneath for him to step on, but the peasant is said to have drawn back in alarm, exclaiming: "There is dough sticking on the oven, and bread is the gift of God; it would be sacrilege to step on it. Put a chair here instead." He could take the life of a man, the most sacred of all God's gifts, but would not step on a piece of dough, because bread was the gift of God! Just as inconsistent is Saul in our lesson story. He would not obey the Lord, but he would not fail to offer sacrifice to Him. The spirit of religion is more than the form, is Samuel's lesson in his words to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I To obey is better than Sacrifice

Saul thought that Sacrifice was Better than Obedience. There is an article in a British magazine bearing the title, *Three Mottoes.* These are the mottoes: I and God; God and I; God and not I. The writer says that when he first became a Christian he thought of himself first and asked God to help him attain his own will; then as he advanced in Christian service he thought of himself as a co-worker with God in work that was God's work; but at last he realized in God the one Great Worker and in himself only an instrument to be used in God's own way and time.

Saul's motto at this time evidently was "I and God"; when he left this stage in his experience he did not advance to the higher one of "God and I," but went backward to that of "I and not God." He was self-willed, and he could not bear to have his will resisted.

In the first story of the way in which Samuel was led to declare God's anger and to foretell his downfall (chapter 13), Saul showed that he was scrupulous about going to battle without offering sacrifices to the Lord, but cared not about disobeying the Lord's command through Samuel as prophet.

In our lesson of to-day, he had spared the king of the Amalekites against the express command that every Amalekite should be put to death, and this he did for the sake of adding to his own triumph. Josephus says that Agag was spared because of his stature and beauty. We are told in verse 12 that he went to Carmel and set up a monument there; Dean Stanley informs us that according to Jewish tradition this monument was a triumphal arch of olives, myrtles and palms. In this triumphal journey Agag no doubt was made to take part as Saul's distinguished prisoner of war. He spared the best of the sheep and oxen, and then thought that if he sacrificed some of them to God he would be justified in disobeying God's command. Here again he showed that he thought to sacrifice was better than to obey.

Obedience the Foundation of Other Virtues. Schiller says that "the first great law is to obey," a thought expressed by Kipling in his *Jungle Tales* in these forcible words:—

Now these are the laws of the Jungle, and many and mighty are they;
But the head and the hoof of the Law and the haunch and the hump is — Obey!

Obedience should be Unconditional. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it," is the law of discipleship. We must lose our will in Christ's. Our surrender should include every part of our being. Too many enthrone Christ over only a portion of the kingdom of their life. They spare some Agag, some cherished indulgence, some dear habit, something that should have been destroyed. Or they shrink from going the full length in their consecration or in their service, saving their life instead of losing it in the abandonment of love. Such a life, however, with its reserves and its withholdings, does not realize the full meaning of joy and power that Christ meant us to attain in our discipleship. There should be neither reserves nor withholdings. We belong to Christ and should give Him all. *J. R. Miller,* in *How, When, Where.*

II Making Excuses

Excuses can not be made to God. Each one of us shall give account of himself to God, says Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. He may, and he very often does, give an account of himself to others in which he shifts all the blame for whatever has been wrong upon some one else, but in his account to God he must bear the responsibility for his own deeds. From the time that Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed Eve, people have been trying to make some one else bear the blame for what they themselves are responsible, have been seeking some scapegoat to bear their sins even as the high priest on the Day of Atonement symbolically laid the sins of the Hebrew people on the head of a goat and sent it off to perish in the wilderness.

When Aaron made the golden calf he excused himself to Moses by saying that it was all the people's fault; "Thou knowest the people that they are set on evil," he said. His motives, moreover, were good, he seemed to think, for he had built an altar before the image and proclaimed a feast to Jehovah. In a similar way Saul excused himself to Samuel by putting the blame for his disobedience upon the people. "They have brought them from the Amalekites," he said, "the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, the people took of the spoil." His motives, too, were good in his own sight, for he declared that the oxen and sheep were spared "to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God." Samuel paid no heed to his shallow excuses but declared; "Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, He hath also rejected thee from being king."

Acknowledge Mistakes. It is hard to admit that we are wrong. How easy to say, "the woman, the serpent, my temperament, my circumstances!" Few things more surely reveal our self-love and pride than this instinctive, automatic excuse-making. We thoroughly understand the lawyer who asked the question, "And who is my neighbor?" wishing to "justify himself." There is little hope for our growth in virtue, unless we make up our minds frankly to admit the truth about ourselves, no matter how it hurts. No man can afford to play ostrich. Self-deception is seldom genuine, and conscious duplicity ruins. "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." To acknowledge our mistakes is not only wise, and marks an advance in self-knowledge, but it means self-mastery, spiritual victory. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

III Penitence, not for the Sins, but for the Penalty

Saul's Insincerity. Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned; for I have

transgressed the commandment of Jehovah, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Saul seems to be penitent, but it is only a seeming, for in the same sentence that he confesses his sin he denies his responsibility for the sin, and again throws the blame upon the people — I feared the people and obeyed their voice. And when Samuel refused to worship with him he said once more, "I have sinned," and further added: "Yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship Jehovah thy God." He regretted the consequences of the sin rather than the sin, he did not want to break with Samuel, he feared the lessening of his power and influence if the elders and the people saw that Samuel refused to honor him. Early in the Bible record we read that after the penalty had been pronounced upon Cain for slaying his brother, he cried out: "My punishment is greater than I can bear; I shall be a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass that whosoever findeth me will slay me." Cain regretted his deed, not because of its sin, but because of its penalty. Saul would recall now his act of disobedience if he could, because he fears the consequences of his sin. It is interesting to note that the Latin verb, *pœnitere* from which our verb *repent* comes, is probably akin to *poena, punishment;* may this not be because punishment has so much to do with repentance?

The Nature of Repentance. The little girl who defined repentance as "Being sorry enough to quit" well understood the meaning of this word. There are too many people like the Japanese orator at a public meeting. He had called a public official a thief, and when a policeman gravely spoke to him in a low voice, he at once said to the audience: "The Chief of Police requests me to retract the word I have spoken. Although the word of a sage should never be taken back, let us make a concession; let us take back the word and keep the idea." We would take back the wrong deed we have done when we see its consequences, but we allow the idea to remain with us, and when the next occasion comes we sin again.

True repentance is not only sincere, but it is permanent. It not only regrets the deed, but it mourns the sin. It not only looks back with sorrow to the sin committed, but it looks forward with purposeful care to the coming occasions of sin. The Psalmist said, "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin;" but he also said, "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way; I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."

True repentance means the putting away not only of the evil acts but also of the evil thoughts. The evil can not be overthrown, root and branch, unless the thoughts of the mind and the desires of the heart are made right; outward evil acts can not be repented and inward evil thoughts still be harbored. We do not destroy the weed by cutting off the leaves and letting the stalk branch out again; we pull it up root and all.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Worship is life, not ceremony. *Charles Kingsley.*

Sacrifice without obedience is sacrilege. *Dwight L. Moody.*

Ought is the strongest word in human speech; *excuse* the weakest. *H. W. Warren.*

Man has so many enemies that he can not afford to be his own foe. *Emerson.*

I have generally found that the man who is good at excuses is good for nothing else. *Benjamin Franklin.*

Who wears a crown must fear to see
Both crown and kingdom slip away:
Who rules himself a king shall be.
Secure unto his dying day. *Arlo Bates.*

There may be nothing strikingly dramatic about the rewards or consequences of daily, steadfast obedience to God, but they shine in "something of an angel light" when men look back to the tragedy of disobedience. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

This people draw nigh unto me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me. Isa. 29. 13.

To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. Mark 12. 33.

Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. Matt. 9. 13.

What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs, or of he-goats. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Isaiah 1:11, 16.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

We have Christ's commandments; do we always keep them? Do we know anything of what David meant when he said, "I delight to do Thy will, O God?" Or do we like Saul seek to be only measurably obedient, obeying the commandment in general, but having our own will about it in the particulars?

Am I careful about religious forms and observances while indifferent to the true spirit of religion?

When did I last try to shirk my responsibility by putting blame upon some one else? Was I not in that instance as culpable as was Saul? Hereafter I will fairly face my own responsibility.

Is it fear of being found out and punished that keeps me from sin, or fear of the sin itself? Is it the penalty that follows sin committed, or the having yielded to sin, that I feel most keenly? These words of Shakespeare are true:

A true repentance shuns the evil itself
More than the eternal suffering or the shame.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Saul was told by Samuel that it was God's will he should give battle to the Amalekites, the people who had opposed the Israelites on their way from Egypt to Canaan, and utterly destroy them and their possessions. Saul carried out the command in part, only; he spared Agag the king and the best of the sheep and oxen and all that was good. When "the word of the Lord" came to Samuel telling him what Saul had done and of His displeasure, Samuel was

greatly troubled and "cried unto the Lord all night." In the morning he sought Saul at Gilgal, and Saul greeted him in a friendly way and at once said, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." "Have you, indeed;" returned Samuel, "then what does this lowing and bleating mean that I hear?" "O yes, those sheep and oxen," said Saul, "they are the people's; it is the people's fault that the best of the sheep and oxen are spared, but their motive is good, they wish to offer them in sacrifice to the Lord our God." "Cease your excuses, and I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night," replied Samuel. "What was it?" "Although you were little in your own sight, did not the Lord place you at the head of the tribes of Israel? Do you not owe obedience to Him, rather than to the people? Are you not responsible for them, as their king? The Lord gave you a commission to execute His judgment upon the wicked Amalekites, bidding you utterly destroy them; why did you disobey and greedily save the spoil?" "I have not disobeyed," Saul reaffirmed, "I have done as commanded and have brought Agag the king of Amalek to prove it; it was the people who spared the sheep and oxen, but this they did only for the sake of sacrificing them to the Lord." "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in being obeyed?" solemnly questioned the prophet. "To obey is better than sacrifice. Rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness like the sin of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you from being king." Alarmed at the punishment he was to suffer, Saul claimed to repent of his disobedience, but still laid the blame upon the people, and he besought Samuel to pardon his sin, and come and worship with him. But like Cato the Censor, reiterating that "Carthage must be destroyed," the prophet repeated Saul's doom. As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of his robe to detain him, and tore it. The prophet saw in this a symbol of the tearing away from Saul of his kingdom and the giving of it to a better king. Again Saul acknowledged his sin and begged Samuel to honor him before the people and turn with him to worship. Samuel yielded in this, and then demanded that Agag be brought before him. At once he put Agag to death and returned to Ramah. Though the kingdom was not taken away from Saul for many years, the prophet never again came to see him.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Dead Line.

2. The character of Saul. "He alternately attracts and disappoints us. He is a mixture of loyalty and disobedience. He makes ready the way for something better than himself. He is the true Old Testament man."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Tell the story of Ruth which was one of your lessons last year. 2. Who was Ruth's son? Grandson? Great Grandson? (Ruth 4. 14–17.) 3. To what tribe did David belong? ((Matt. 1. 1–6.) 4. Who was "David's Greater Son"? (Matt. 1. 17.) 5. What is said of David in 1 Sam. 13. 14; Acts 13. 22? 6. Read Psalm 139. 1–7 and write what is there said about God as the Searcher of men's hearts.

LESSON V — AUGUST 2

DAVID ANOINTED AT BETHLEHEM

I Sam. 16. 1:13. (Read I Sam. 16.) Commit vv. 11, 12.

Golden Text

Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. I Sam. 16. 7.

LESSON TEXT I Sam. 16. 1–13

1 And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed *is* before him.

7 But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the Lord seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these.

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Mourn for Saul.* Compare 15. 11. *Reigning.* R. V., *being king. Fill thy horn with oil.* "As though the particular horn used in anointing Saul were to be used again." *Smith. Jesse.* The grandson of Ruth and Boaz.

2. *He will kill me.* Compare 16. 14 and 22. 17–19. *I am come to sacrifice to Jehovah.* It appears that Samuel was in the habit of offering sacrifice in different places, and he prudently mentions only this object of his visit, keeping silent about the more important object.

4. *The elders of the town trembled at his coming.* R. V., *the elders of the city came to meet him trembling.* Perhaps they went to meet him with guilty consciences, fearing he had come to rebuke some sin.

5. *Sanctify yourselves.* The sanctifying before participating in any sacred act consisted in ablutions and in refraining from whatever would make one ceremonially unclean. See Ex. 19. 10. *He sanctified Jesse and his sons.* Samuel himself superintended their purification.

6. *When they were come.* To the sacrificial feast. See the end of verse 11. *And said.* To himself, of course. *Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him.* Compare the next verse and 10. 23, 24.

7. *Jehovah said.* To Samuel's conscience. *Height of his stature.* An allusion to Saul's stature. *Refused.* R. V., *rejected. For man . . . beast.* The contrast is between physical gifts on the one hand, and mental and moral attainments on the other.

10. *Seven of his sons.* Including the three mentioned by name.

11. *He keepeth.* R. V., *he is keeping. Sit down.* R. V., margin, *sit around.* They would not sit around the table for the feast which followed the sacrifice.

12. *Ruddy.* This may refer to the color of his skin, but some scholars refer it to his hair. Browning in *Saul* speaks of him as "God's child with His dew, on thy gracious gold hair." *Of a beautiful countenance.* R. V., margin, *fair of eyes. Look to.* R. V., *look upon.*

13. *Came upon.* R. V., *came mightily upon.* Compare 10. 6.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. *I am come to sacrifice.* A superior man must have reticences in him. If he walk wearing his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at, his journey will not extend far! There is no use for any man's taking up his abode in a house built of glass. A man always is to be himself the judge how much of his mind he will show to other men; even to those he would have work along with him. There are impertinent inquiries made; your rule is, to leave the inquirer uninformed on that matter; not, if you can help it, misinformed, but precisely as dark as he was! He that can not withal keep his mind to himself can not practice any considerable thing whatever. And we call it dissimulation, all this? What would you think of calling the general of an army a dissembler because he did not tell every corporal and private soldier who pleased to put the question, his thoughts about everything? *Thomas Carlyle, Heroes and Hero-Worship.*

12. *He was goodly to look upon.* This is our first introduction to the future king. From the sheepfolds on the hill side the boy was brought in. He took his place at the village feast, when with a silent gesture, perhaps with a secret whisper into his ear, the sacred oil was poured by the prophet over his head. We are enabled to fix his appearance at once in our minds. He had red or auburn hair, such as is not unfrequently seen in his countrymen of the East at the present day. His bright eyes are especially mentioned, and he was remarkable for the grace of his figure and countenance, well made, and of im-

mense strength and agility. In swiftness and activity he could only be compared to a wild gazelle, with feet like hart's feet, and with arms strong enough to break a bow of steel. He was pursuing the occupation usually allotted in eastern countries to the slaves, the females, or the despised of the family. He carried a switch, or wand, in his hand, such as would be used for his dogs, and a scrip or wallet round his neck, to carry anything that was needed for his shepherd's life, and a sling to ward off beasts or birds of prey. *Dean Stanley, Jewish Church.*

13. *Samuel anointed him in the midst of his brethren.* We are not informed whether Samuel explained to him or to his father the meaning of this sacred rite. The likelihood is that he did not, because his words would have been sure in some way or other to have reached the ears of Saul, and then all his prudential measures would have been taken in vain. But David could receive all needful knowledge from another quarter, for "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward." Not with stormful gust like that which swept over the soul of Saul when he met the children of the prophets, and which speedily passed away; but with the gentle silence of the opening dawn, which brightens into perfect day, the Spirit came into David's heart, and soon, by His secret, supernatural suggestions, he would discover for what purpose the prophet had emptied the horn of oil upon his head. *W. M. Taylor.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Fill thy horn with oil.* Few travelers return from Switzerland without a finely-polished drinking cup made from a ram's horn; such cups have been used from very ancient times, for the horns are hollow and are easily polished. The Greek word for *horn* may mean a trumpet or a drinking-horn, and the Latin word may mean a trumpet, an oil cruet, or a funnel. The horn in our text was a flask for oil. In the time of Solomon, a horn with its anointing oil was kept in the sanctuary, and with this Solomon was anointed king (1 Kings 1. 39).

11. *We will not sit down till he come hither.* A sacrificial meal was held with the pieces of the victims laid aside from sacrifices of a joyful nature. Only the thank-offerings of individuals, however, gave opportunity for these festivals, since of these alone certain rich portions were consumed on the altar; the breast and the right shoulder belonged to the officiating priests, and all the rest of the flesh was restored to the offerer. This was to be eaten on the same or the following day, and in the company of all members of the household and of bidden guests. *Winer.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethlehem is six miles south of Jebus, or Jerusalem. It was known as Ephrath until after the Conquest. A short distance from the city is the traditional place where Jacob buried Rachel. In the fields of Boaz near by Ruth gleaned behind the reapers. Here David was born and here he was anointed by Samuel.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

David was the son of Jesse, the grandson of Obed, the great grandson of

Boaz. From his great grandmother Ruth, the Moabitess, and his ancestress Rahab of Jericho, there was alien blood in his veins. "It required three generations for the descendants of aliens to become members of Israel, and thus David could be reckoned a full Jew, though his father still stood in a measure outside the congregation;" says Dr. Geikie, "the family seems to have been, as it were, the feudal lord of the village and the district round it, for the elders of the country appear at the yearly feast of Jesse's household, and David in after years gave a grant of land in the neighborhood, as if his own right, to the son of his friend Barzillai."

Various dates are assigned for the year of David's birth. It is helpful to keep in mind that he lived about a thousand years before Christ.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you remember the beautiful story about Ruth and Naomi which we studied at the close of last year? To what land did Ruth belong? To what city in Canaan were she and Naomi going? Why were they going there? How did Ruth show her love for Naomi? How did she gain food for her and for herself? Whom did she marry? At the close of the last chapter in the book of Ruth we are told that Ruth had a son named Obed, and Obed a son named Jesse, and Jesse a son named David.

To-day we are introduced again to this family of Ruth. Samuel the prophet journeys to this same city of Bethlehem to see Ruth's grandson, Jesse, and his family of many sons. David is Jesse's youngest son. We are to have twelve lessons about David, and I am sure you will become deeply interested in his life, for it is one of the most fascinating lives in the whole Bible. There is scarcely a hero in any of your story books who passes through so many adventures as does David. As a lad he kept his father's sheep among the hills surrounding Bethlehem, and had to defend them from wild animals. Once a lion bounded through the thicket and seizing a lamb started to carry it off. There were no guns in those days, and David had only a club and knife, but he threw himself upon the lion and slew him. David was caring for his sheep when Samuel came to Bethlehem.

For Older Pupils. The story of David's life is told in ninety-one chapters of the Bible, occupying a greater amount of space than that of any other Bible hero, and it is replete with stirring incidents. There was no monotony in David's life; events follow close upon one another alike in his life at Saul's court, his life in exile, and his life on the throne.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Man looketh on the Outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart

Look not on the Height of his Stature. Saul, the first king of Israel, was tall and imposing, a head taller than all the people, while David, the second king, was short in stature, but in real worth Saul was to David as the buzzing of a fly to the peal of a full-toned organ. Samuel looked at Eliab, Jesse's oldest son; and was drawn to him because of his appearance; "Surely," he said to himself, "Jehovah's anointed is before Him." Yet in some way he was

made to realize that he was judging superficially, basing his verdict on Eliab's looks and on the height of his stature, and that God did not judge in this way, that man had regard to outward appearances, while God had regard to inward worth. Paul was a little man, but in Chrysostom's words about him we see what was his stature in God's judgment: "This man of three cubits' height became tall enough to reach the third heaven."

"Pigmies are pigmies still; though perched on the Alps,
And pyramids are pyramids in vales,
Each man makes his own stature, builds himself;
Virtue alone outbuilds the pyramids;
Her monuments shall last, when Egypt's fall—
'Tis mortal grandeur makes the mighty man."

Look not on the Richness of his Clothes. Man often judges another by the clothes he wears. As well might one expect a firefly to give forth heat because of its flashes of light, or an owl to utter words of wisdom because it looks so wise, as to expect a man to be superior in innate worth because he wears superior clothes. "The mair I gae aboot," wisely observes Jean Muckrose, "the mair I see that men are much alike, whether they stan' on the bare earth or on a pile o' siller, or wear a shepherd's plaid or a gown o' gold."

When Lord John Russell was Prime Minister of England he went to a telegraph office in a small village to send a message. The clerk saw only a little, old man in a great coat and rudely flung his message back to him saying, "Here, put your own name on it; it is a pity your master does not know how to send a telegram." The telegraph operator's eye saw only the great coat which he took to be that of a servant: "God's eye," says Jean Muckrose, "sees only the man inside o' the claithes."

Covet God's Judgment, not Man's. One of the surprises in heaven must surely be the revelation of the difference between our judgments of others and God's judgment of them. "God will never receive us upon any invoice sent from this world," said Dr. Henry Ward Beecher. "Every man is to be reappraised, unpacked, examined, mostly thrown away; and that which is least esteemed here is to be measured most and judged most, and the reverse, so that the last shall be first and the first shall be last."

All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped,

is Browning's creed.

"Fame is vapor, popularity an accident, only one thing endures — character," said Horace Greeley. Character is what we are, while reputation is what others think we are. The youth who starts out in life with a determination to win reputation has a praiseworthy ambition, but the one whose aim is to make for himself a noble character has an infinitely higher ambition. He who is highly esteemed by the world and accepts this estimation as his right valuation is in great danger of caring little for God's true valuation of his worth. A recent writer says that "the difference between living to society and living to God is the difference between living in a cage and singing in a sky. Constrained and cramped is the life that looks no farther than human appreciation or displeasure: but to prize and enjoy God's favor is to soar on eagle's wings, to sing with the lark at heaven's gate. To seek the honor that comes from men instead of the honor that comes from God is to lower our whole spiritual life."

II Lives set Apart

What David's Anointing meant to him.

"Latest born of Jesse's race,
Wonder lights thy bashful face,
While the Prophet's gifted oil
Seals thee for a path of toil."

I can conceive of nothing to which a noble soul responds more profoundly than to the sense of being a selected life; a life chosen, set apart, exalted from the mass, specialized unto a purpose. In the hour of David's anointing it dawns upon him that he is a selected life — that he is set apart for an unusual destiny. What thought is greater than this to a soul that is noble? While we all know that there are and ever have been selected lives, and while we all recognize selection in others who by their gifts and callings and opportunities are manifestly set apart in the world as its leaders, there is much difficulty for many a noble soul in conceiving of itself as one of the called.

In every grouping of men there will be gradings of power — some men more evidently born for leadership than others. Even among the twelve Apostles there were gradings of power and a few natural leaders. Yet they were all called and selected and set apart by Christ to go out into the world and to spread the light of His coming up and down the world. *Charles Cuthbert Hall.*

Consecrated Lives. All the living members of a class that was graduated from Princeton College more than twenty years ago returned lately to visit their Alma Mater, and to talk over old times. After they had gone, a venerable doctor of divinity, who had been their tutor when they were students, said:

"I discovered one singular fact with regard to them. Among them were three men who, as boys, were full of enthusiasm, who believed that they were called to some special work in life, and who sacrificed everything else to that. They were the only men in their class who had made their mark on their generation.

"One was an inventor, another a leader in a great reform movement, the third an author. Neither of the three had made money, or was reckoned, in the worldly sense of the word, a successful man; but they were the only ones who had strongly influenced their fellow-men."

In old times men generally believed that God Himself summoned them to a certain work or method of life. It was their "vocation" or "calling," because He called them to it. In these modern days men are apt to espouse the cause or take up the occupation which will pay best.

Sometimes, however, there still comes to a boy or man the conviction that a Power higher than the world, with its policy and expediency, is urging him into an untried path. If he is sure that he is right, let him attempt it, fearing nothing. He will soon have a great following. The world in its ordinary movements is shrewd and mercenary; but in its heart it loves the man with a high purpose, and in the end is led by him.

In the gardens of the Tuileries there stands the statue of a young girl on horseback, which is always covered with fresh garlands and votive wreaths. In the ancient city of Rouen, in the market-place where the shrewd hucksters chaffer over their fish and meat, one space in the pavement is always kept reverently vacant. The pious Catholics mutter a prayer as they pass it by, and even the hurrying tourists pause and look at the gray stone with a quicker beating

of the heart. Above is the inscription, "Here the Maid of Orleans was burned at the stake."

Very few among these pitying crowds know precisely what the cause was which this girl nearly five hundred years ago upheld. But they do know, that while tending her sheep, she heard, or believed she heard, voices from heaven bidding her defend it, and that, to defend it, she gave up her home and her womanly life, and in the end suffered a death of torture. It is not her cause, but her faith in it, which makes the poor girl of Domremy alive to us to-day.

But if you have not this faith and this fervor of purpose, do not pretend to have them. You will deceive no one by fire which does not burn. All the world will know, though you may not, whether it is a heavenly call which urges you to your eccentric course, or only the voice of your own vanity and ambition. *Youth's Companion.*

III In Training

The Anointing Oil of the Lord was upon David. This sudden change in all the outlook of his life must have given him new materials for thought when he went back to his humble task. Responsibility, or the prospect of it, makes lads into men very quickly. Graver meditation, humbler consciousness of weakness, firmer trust in God who had laid the burden upon him, would do in days the work of years. And the necessity for bidding back the visions of the future in order to do faithfully the obscure duties of the present, would add self-control and patience, not usually the graces of youth. How swiftly he matured is singularly shown in the next recorded incident — his summons to the court of Saul,— by the character of him drawn by the courtier who recommends him to the king. He speaks of David in words more suitable to a man of established renown than to a stripling. He is minstrel and warrior, "cunning in playing, and a mighty, valiant man," and "skilled in speech and fair in form, and the Lord is with him." So quickly had the new circumstances and the energy of the Spirit of God, like tropical sunshine, ripened his soul. *Alexander Maclaren, Expositions of the Bible.*

Aim High. When the Greek generals were consulting together in regard to a war they were planning to wage, Nestor's sage remark was that "The secret of victory is getting a good ready." How many young people realize that the secret of the success or failure of their lives lies in the kind of preparation they are now making? All that the Gospels tell us about the life of Jesus between the years of twelve and thirty is that "He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." The eighteen intervening years in which He was being prepared for His mission were years of physical, mental, and spiritual growth. If your years of preparation for your after life are spent in living according to the rules of hygiene so that you are increasing in stature and storing up health and reserve strength, in studying so that you are daily adding to your store of wisdom, in kindness and helpfulness to others so that you are increasing in favor with man, and, above all else, in serving the Lord with all your heart so that your spiritual growth is pleasing to Him, then you are "getting a good ready," and you will surely make of your life a grand success as God judges.

Breathing, mere existence, is not living: to live is to be alive in every part of our being, to develop all the possibilities that are in us, physical, mental,

spiritual. If we merely drift along we shall not really live our life, for we can not attain to all that we are capable of attaining unless we have high purposes before us. Your life will not rise higher than its aim. Our poet Longfellow tells you that

"If you would hit the mark, you must aim a little above it;
Every arrow that flies feels the attraction of earth."

If you believe that there is another life after this life, that your growth and service here are not alone for the sake of what you can do within the limits of your earthly existence, but are a preparation for that life to come which shall be without end, then the aim which you keep before you will be infinitely higher than it will be if you plan your life's course only for the few years that may be yours here.

We know not now, but we shall know hereafter. A great opera is being produced; a gay throng fills the theatre; the conductor seizes his baton; the curtains rise; music fills the air; actors of finest voice interpret splendid emotions; applause signifies the enchantment of the audience. Who thinks of those dull rehearsals continued till two o'clock that very morning by the weary artists; who understands the toil and patience and genius involved in the production of those great effects? The performers understand it; the conductor just emerged from a long and exciting effort, understands it. And when we stand in the world of our perfect redemption, amid the music of celestial life, we shall remember with thankfulness the tasks and struggles of earth which alone prepared us for it. *H. H. Snell.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

I might have my hand full of truth, and open only my little finger. *Fontenelle.*

"Under the dullest exterior may dwell the fair soul of a Portia."

Size is not strength; reputation is not character; outward success is not God's gauge. *M. D. Babcock.*

In the measure in which we have the love of Christ in us shall we see others as He sees them. *J. R. Miller.*

Though thy name be borne abroad,
Like wing'd seed, from shore to shore,
What thou art before thy God,
That thou art, and nothing more! *Eleanor C. Donelly.*

The great consecrations of life are apt to come suddenly without warning: while we are patiently and faithfully keeping sheep in the wilderness, the messenger is journeying toward us with the vial of sacred oil to make us kings. *Saxe Holm.*

When God looks into the mirrors of human lives, it is as when the sun looks into a dewdrop or an ocean; not the size of what He looks at, but the image of Himself, is what He will see. *Sunday School Times.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. 1 Chron. 28. 9.

And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify themselves in the sight of

men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. Luke 16. 15.

He delighteth not in the strength of the horse:
He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.
Jehovah taketh pleasure in them that fear him,
In those that hope in his loving kindness. Psa. 147. 10, 11.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isa. 55. 8, 9.

Search me, O God, and know my heart:
Try me, and know my thoughts;
And see if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting. Psa. 139. 23, 24.

I, Jehovah, search the mind, I try the heart, ever to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. Jer. 17. 10.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

"No wind serves him who has no destined port," says Montaigne. Toward what port am I sailing, or am I only drifting? Am I not called, like David, to a life of service for others?

Do I covet the good opinion of men more than that of God? "Let not thy peace depend upon the tongues of men; for whether they judge well of one, or ill, I am not on that account other than myself."

Am I misled by appearances? Do I base my opinion of others chiefly upon their outward circumstances, their social standing, their reputation? As I must judge myself by inward worth, so I will endeavor to judge others by the same true standard.

If it were possible, would I be willing to let others know me as God knows me?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

All night long, we are told, Samuel cried unto the Lord when it first became known to him that Saul was not the man for the place to which he had been exalted. After his interview with Saul at Gilgal, Samuel realized that it was time to cease his mourning for Saul and take steps toward securing the right one to succeed him when God should execute His judgment upon him. It was made known to him that one of the sons of Jesse, of the city of Bethlehem, was the right one for the Kingdom, "a man after God's own heart." At first he hesitated to go to Bethlehem lest Saul, hearing of what he purposed doing there, should in his anger seek to kill him. It was important that his main errand should not be known, and he knew he was serving God best by taking a heifer with him for a public sacrifice and letting the people know only of this secondary object of his visit. The elders of the city feared lest he were coming sternly to judge them, and they asked if he came peaceably. "Peaceably," answered Samuel, "I have come to offer sacrifice, sanctify yourselves in accordance with the law that you may take part in the sacrifice."

Samuel himself looked to the ceremonial purification of Jesse and his sons.

Seven of Jesse's sons, one by one, appeared before him. Eliab, the oldest, was so comely in appearance that Samuel thought he must be God's chosen king, but the word of the Lord came to him; "Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Abinadab, Shammah, and four others were brought to him and rejected in his thought. "Are here all thy children?" he asked of Jesse. "The youngest is keeping the sheep," returned the father. "Send for him, for we will not partake of the sacrificial meal till he comes." When he came, he was goodly to look upon and his heart was right. "This is he" came God's word to the prophet, and he took his horn of oil and anointed him before his brethren. Did David know the meaning of this ceremony? we wonder; at least he realized that he was set apart for some great service, for we are told that the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. He returned to his sheep and Samuel returned to Ramah, but David's thoughts and purposes were changed from that hour.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Was David's course at Bethlehem a subterfuge considered allowable in those days, or was it right according to Christian standards? To what extent may we be governed by expediency?

2. What did Samuel mean in 1 Sam. 13. 14 by saying that David was "a man after God's own heart"? In our estimation of ancient characters we must keep in mind the political, religious, and social conditions of the times in which they lived. Samuel did not mean that David was sinless, judged even by the standards of that day. He meant that David was chosen for the work he would accomplish, that where Saul had gone wrong he would go right, where Saul had been self-willed he would yield his will to that of the Lord, where Saul had considered himself the highest head of the people, he would reign as God's ambassador.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Tell the story of the way in which David became Saul's armor-bearer. (1 Sam. 16. 14–23.) 2. Read the entire 17th chapter. 3. What trophy of his prowess did David bring to Saul? (1 Sam. 17. 54–57.) 4. What did David do with Goliath's sword, and under what circumstances did he use it again? (1 Sam. 21. 8–10.) 5. On what occasion did Moses tell the Israelites to "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah which He will work for you to-day: Jehovah will fight for you"? (Ex. 14. 13, 14.) 6. Tell the story of Gideon's attack upon the Midianite camp, and give his words in which he ascribed the victory to the Lord. (Judges 7.) 7. Recall the lesson studied last year about Joshua leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land, and give the words of encouragement so often repeated in the first chapter of the book of Joshua. 8. Read the account of Jonathan's victory at Michmash in the 14th chapter of 1 Sam., and give his words in which he speaks of the Lord's working for them. (Verse 6.) 9. Read Ephesians 6. 10–18. Against what must a Christian fight? What should be his armor?

LESSON VI — AUGUST 9

DAVID AND GOLIATH

I Sam. 17. 38–49. (Read I Sam. 17. 1–18. 5.) Commit vv. 48, 49.

Golden Text

In the Lord put I my trust. Psa. 11. 1.

LESSON TEXT I Sam. 17. 38–49

38 And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.
39 And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.
40 And he took his staff in his hand, and choose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.
41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.
42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.
43 And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.
44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.
45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.
46 This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth: that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.
47 And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle *is* the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.
48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.
49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

38. *Saul armed David with his armour.* R. V., *Saul clad David with his apparel. Also he armed him.* R. V., *and he clad him.*

39. *Armour.* R. V., *apparel. He assayed to go.* He made an unsuccessful attempt to walk in the heavy armour.

40. *The brook.* R. V., margin, *the torrent bed.* The brook which ran through the valley between the two camps was probably dry. *A scrip.* R. V., *his wallet.*

41. This verse is omitted in the Septuagint.

42. *And of.* R. V., *and withal of.*

43. *Thou comest to me with staves.* Budde suggests that the staff, verse 40,

deceived the giant in regard to David's actual weapon and was carried for that purpose, that Goliath might not protect himself in time from the stones.

44. *The fowls of the air.* R. V., *the birds of the heavens.*

45. *Shield.* R. V., *javelin.*

46. *Take thine head from thee.* R. V., *take thy head from off thee. Carcasses.* R. V., *dead bodies. Fowls of the air.* R. V., *the birds of heaven.*

47. *And all this assembly shall know.* R. V., *and that all this assembly may know. Jehovah saveth not . . . hand.* "Nowhere else outside of the New Testament does the message of encouragement to the humble and exhortation to the weak in faith receive so affecting, so inspiring an expression."

48. *Hasted.* R. V., *hastened.* 49. *That the stone.* R. V., *and the stone.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

43–47. As modern warfare is conducted, such a colloquy as this between combatants seems to be ridiculous; but every one who is familiar with Homer's *Iliad* will see a wonderful similarity between the speeches of Goliath and David, and those which the father of poetry puts into the mouths of his heroes in similar circumstances. See in particular, the speeches of Glaucus and Diomede in the sixth book of the *Iliad.* "Come hither," says Glaucus, "that you may quickly reach the goal of death." *W. M. Taylor, David.*

47. *The battle is Jehovah's.* Never Puritan went into battle with a loftier inspiration. It was a touch of the same spirit that Cromwell caught when he chose "The Lord of Hosts" for his battle cry at Dunbar, and greeted the rout of his foe with the words of the Psalm, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered." *Cunningham Geikie, Hours with the Bible.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

38. *A helmet of brass and a coat of mail.* The helmet was like a row of feathers set on a band of metal, to which was attached scales of the same material for the defense of the back of the neck. The coat of mail was a corslet of scales, made of overlapping plates of metal, perhaps fixed on cloth, and reaching almost to the knees. *Cunningham Geikie, Hours with the Bible.*

Assyrian Coat of Mail and Helmet

39. *His sword.* The sword was one of the earliest weapons in use. The Egyptian sword was short and straight, two and a half to three feet long, and double-edged. The handle was plain and hollowed in the center, the better to afford a firm grasp. The Hebrew sword probably resembled it. *Freeman.*

40. *The shepherd's bag, the wallet.* This leather bag was the skin of a kid stripped off whole and dried. It is this which Christ told His disciples not to take with them on their first preaching tour: "Take no wallet for your journey," He said, "neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff."

Used by Courtesy of M. De Brunoff

Copyright, 1904

GOLIATH ADDRESSING DAVID—*Tissot*

40. *His sling was in his hand.* The sling was made of leather, or of plaited work of wool, rushes, hair, or sinews. The middle part, where the stone lay, was called the cup, from its cup-like depression. It was wider than the ends, for the sling gradually narrowed toward the extremities, so that it could be easily handled. In the Egyptian sling, which probably was the same as the Hebrew, there was a loop at one end which was placed over the thumb, in order to retain the weapon when the stone was hurled and the other end became free. The sling was used by shepherds to keep the beasts of prey from the flock, and also to keep the sheep from straying. In war it was a favorite weapon in skilful hands. In using the sling, the stone was put into the broad hollowed part, the ends were grasped together in the hands, and after a few whirls around the head to give impetus, the stone was discharged, frequently with force enough to penetrate helmet or shield. The Benjamites were so skilful in the use of this weapon that some of them could sling stones at a hair and not miss. (Judges 20. 16.) *Freeman, Handbook.*

The Earliest Representation of David. From a Painting above a Vault in the Roman Catacombs

The invention of firearms has not superseded the old weapons of antiquity, and it is almost as common now to see a shepherd armed with a sling as it was in David's time. This is particularly true of the Bedouin or Arab of the desert. *Van Lennep.*

43. *Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?* The Eastern dog is the public scavenger; he is dirty, and repulsive, owns no master but roams freely about the streets, and is kicked about and treated as a nuisance. The staff which the shepherd carries he uses for a support in climbing hills, for driving the sheep out from the low bushes where they stray, and also for keeping the shepherd dogs in subjection. It is to this last use that Goliath refers. A further explanation of his words is given by Roberts in his *Oriental Illustrations:* Men of high caste will not strike those of low caste with the hand, because the touch would defile them; they therefore beat them with a stick or other weapon. To offer to strike any person with a stick, then, is very provoking, and the person so struck will ask, "Am I a dog?" When a man wishes to make another angry, he pretends to be looking for a stick which will produce a similar question and feeling. Sometimes, however, they only repeat the proverb, "Take up a stick, and a dog will run."

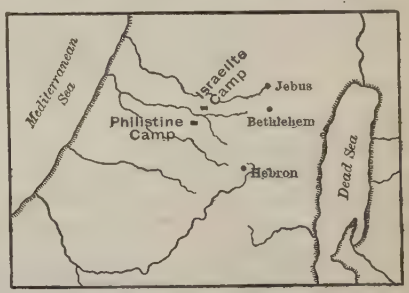
44. *I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field.* By the Jews and by all oriental people not to be buried after death was considered one of the greatest dishonors that could befall one. In Deuteronomy 28. 26 it is said that one of the fearful consequences of disobedience to God's law will be that "Thy dead body shall be food unto all birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten

them away." When the seven sons of Saul were hung by the Gibeonites, Rizpah, the mother of two of them, remained by the bodies "from the beginning of harvest till water was poured upon them from heaven," and "suffered neither the birds of the heavens to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

It is said that the threat of Goliath is still in Palestine a favorite way of terrifying an enemy. "Begone, or I will give thy flesh to the jackals." "The crows shall have thy carcass." "Yes, the teeth of the dogs shall soon have hold of thee." "The eagles are ready."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

About twelve miles west of Bethlehem two wadies, or river beds, meet, the one starting in the neighborhood of Bethlehem, the other in the neighborhood of Hebron. The united torrents in winter have made a deep ravine through the winding valley of Elah, which breaks through the mountains of Judah and then crosses the Low Hills. Up this valley the Philistines had come and encamped at Shocoh, on a hill five hundred feet above the plain of Elah on the south. On the hill opposite across the valley the Israelites were located. Down into this valley daily the Philistine champion strode and uttered his challenge which was plainly heard by the Israelites on their hill-top, and here at the spot called Ephesdammim the encounter took place between him and David.



THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At times Saul became subject to extreme depression, perhaps to insanity. His servants suggested that music would bring him relief, and recommended David to him as "skilful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a comely person." David was sent for, and his playing on his harp had the desired effect on Saul. Saul loved him and made him his armor-bearer.

Another account of David's introduction to Saul is given in the seventeenth chapter. Saul's reign seems to have been one long warfare, with only occasional respites. The three oldest sons of Jesse had joined Saul's army, and David was sent by his father to bring them food. Finding the armies of the Israelites and of the Philistines drawn up in battle array, and the giant Goliath uttering his challenge which no Israelite dared accept, David said, "Who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" Despite his oldest brother Eliab's reproval, David continued to talk with the warriors, and his words were reported to Saul. Saul sent for David.

We may understand with Josephus that several years passed between David's life at court as Saul's musician and his appearance in camp ready to fight Goliath, and therefore the king failed to recognize him; or we may assume that Saul was in one of his dark moods and could not recognize his armor-bearer in the youth with his shepherd garb, and that verse 15, which says that

"David went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep in Bethlehem" explains his being sent by his father to his brothers; or we may consider the two stories as coming from different sources, and verse 15 an attempt by the editor to reconcile them. Professor Kent says: "If we had not discovered that the Book of Samuel is a compilation, we should share with the translators of the Septuagint the difficulty which led them to leave out a large part of chapter 17 in the fruitless endeavor to reconcile it with the preceding chapter."

In 2 Samuel 21. 19 we read that "Elhanan slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam." Nowhere in the account of David's combat with the giant is he called other than "the Philistine," and it has been suggested that the name of Elhanan's adversary, Goliath, has been transferred to this Philistine adversary of David's, and that the statement in 1 Chron. 20. 5, that "Elhanan slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite" was an attempt of a later chronicler to harmonize the two statements found in Samuel.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Who is the tallest man you know? How tall is he? Two years ago a Russian named Teodor Andrieff Machnoureez was brought to our country and exhibited in some of the large cities, because he is such a giant. Wherever he appeared he was followed by great crowds, and one of the large hotels in New York objected to keeping him because such crowds of people stormed the hotel whenever he came in. He is nine feet three inches tall, and he weighs four hundred and fifty pounds. Would he have to stoop to enter this door?

What is the name of the Philistine giant that we hear about in our lesson to-day? Do you know how tall he was? The Bible says he was six cubits and a span in height. The cubit was originally the measure of the forearm, but the forearm varied in different men, of course, and we are not perfectly sure just what was the average length, nor, indeed, whether the measurement was from the elbow to the wrist only, or from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. The Egyptian cubit measured seventeen and two-thirds inches, about a foot and a half, and probably this was the measure of the Hebrew cubit in Old Testament times. Goliath, then, was nine feet and nine inches in height, only six inches taller than this Russian giant, and by some estimates he was not so tall as Machnoureez. Goliath must have been very strong as well as tall, for his coat of mail weighed about a hundred and fifty pounds. He has been called "a stalking mountain overlaid with brass and iron." Before him a man walked carrying a shield which was so large that it protected his whole body. How was David clothed and armed? Turn to your maps and let us see just where the two met, and where the armies were that were looking on.

For Older Pupils. One summer when Senator Beveridge and a friend were enjoying a vacation in the Maine woods, they longed for something to read. "What's the matter with the Bible?" suggested Mr. Beveridge. "Oh, I don't want anything dull. I don't want to be preached to," replied his friend. "Why the Bible has more good reading than anything I know of. What will you have? — poetry, adventure, politics, maxims, oratory? For they are all here," said Mr. Beveridge as he produced the Bible. At the close of the read-

ing the listener remarked, "Why, I never knew that was in the Bible. Let's have some more of that to-morrow." The next day a guide chanced to hear the reading and stopped to listen. The day after all the guides came, and the reading became a regular part of the day's program. Once, when the reading was delayed, "Indian Charley" remarked that it was "about time to have some more of that there Bible." When they wanted a story of adventure,—"One that would make their blood jump and yet uplift them," they turned to the 17th chapter of the first book of Samuel and read our lesson of to-day.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Preparing for Victory

David's Preparation. David began to prepare for his voctory over Goliath in his boyhood days, as a shepherd lad watching his father's flock on the hills of Judah. He braved heat and cold and hunger and weariness, and imperiled his life defending the sheep from robbers and from beasts. He gained his skill in slinging stones in using them as weapons against his wild foes. When a bear came and seized a lamb, he bravely rescued it and slew the bear. This victory gave him strength and courage to face the lion when he came to ravage the flock. Daringly he seized him by the beard and slew him, too. Had he fled from the bear he would have fled from the lion, and had he braved the bear but fled from the lion he would never have dared face the giant.

After his victory over Goliath, David took the giant's sword with which he had cut off his head, and put it away as a trophy in the sanctuary at Nob. In those days it was the custom to hang up in the sacred temples the swords or shields or other weapons taken from the enemy in warfare, just as it has been the custom in modern European countries to erect a monument out of the cannon taken from an enemy in some great battle. Some time afterwards David was forced to flee from Saul, who sought to take his life. He had no weapon and he went to Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, and asked him for one. The aged priest replied that the only weapon he could give him was Goliath's sword, which David himself had deposited in the Lord's house. "There is none like that; give it me," joyfully exclaimed David, and this sword, which he had so bravely won, encouraged as well as aided him in defending himself from his enemies till he reached the throne.

Every Act a Preparation for Some Other Act.

No action, whether foul or fair,
Is ever done, but it leaves somewhere
A record written by fingers ghostly,
As a blessing or a curse, and mostly
In the greater weakness or greater strength
Of the acts which follow it.

In these words Longfellow tells us that no act is without its influence on other acts, a victory prepares the way for another victory, and a defeat makes easy a second defeat.

Daniel refused the king's wines and meat, and his steady adherence to right principle gave him the courage he possessed when he went down into the lion's den. When the Duke of Wellington said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the cricketfield at Eaton, he meant that when his soldiers were school

boys at Eaton they were in training for the great victory they were to win in manhood. The Japanese recently astonished the world by their victory over the Russians, but their victory was made possible only by the marvelous preparation which had been going on for years in their own little island home.

II Trusting in God

David's Example. When Saul told David that he was not able to go against Goliath, for he was but a youth and the Philistine a man of war, David told the king about his encounter with the lion and bear, and said, "Jehovah that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." To Goliath David said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hand." This trust in God was habitual with David; throughout his life we see that he was sensitive to the presence of God, and realized His help in all his undertakings. We never hear Saul expressing his confidence in God, acknowledging that his strength comes from Him; again and again we hear David saying that he trusts in God.

One does not have to be Brave alone. A strong, merry-hearted, care-free girl was on her way from school one day when a heavy branch from a tree struck her as it fell. When it was learned that she never would walk again, never again would be free from pain, her friends said how much better it would have been for her if she had died. After a long, bitter fight within herself, the young girl bravely met her fate. She had a motto hung where she could look at it from her bed of pain, the words of the Lord to Joshua as he was entering the promised land, "Be strong and of a good courage, for the Lord thy God is with thee."

In those twelve years that Madeline waited in her prison, as it is said in her story told in a recent paper, her eyes so often rested upon this motto as she talked that her friends began to notice it. And then they remembered that no one had ever heard her complain. But it was not until after she had gone that they understood what she had done for them. One of the girls began telling of the time when she was discouraged over her failure as a nurse. "Madeline didn't pity me. She only said, 'Dear, there's always something left. One can always be brave, and — one doesn't have to be brave alone.' And when I thought of her and her motto, I tell you, girls, I had to brace up. I would have been ashamed to speak to her again if I hadn't." Other experiences followed. To all her message had been the same — One can always be brave — and One doesn't have to be brave alone. Having fought her fight and strengthened uncounted hearts, she passed to her reward.

III Giving God the Glory

The Battle is the Lord's. Here was the secret of David's victory. He went to do God's will. He sought not to glorify himself, but to serve Jehovah; and by this trait in his character he takes his place in the noblest brotherhood of heroes of whom sacred history makes mention. As we read these words we think of Elijah, on the brow of Carmel, confronting the hosts of Baal, and saying in his fervent prayer, "Let it be known this day that Thou art God in

Library of Pacific Bible Seminary 4835 East Anaheim Street Long Beach, California

Israel — hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God." We think of John the Baptist turning away from the temptation that was set before him to proclaim himself Messiah, saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease." We think of Peter calling to the wondering crowd that thronged around the lame man who had been cured, "Why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly at us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" We think of Paul writing from Rome, with his chained hand, to the Philippians and saying, "According to my earnest expectation, and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness as always so also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." David, Elijah, John, Peter, Paul — where are the men who have done more valiantly in the world than they? And yet they did it by putting God uppermost, and seeking His glory first. *W. M. Taylor, David.*

Humble Commanders. When Gideon returned from his secret visit to the camp of the Midianites he climbed the mountain slope and called to his little band of three hundred men: "Arise; for the Lord hath delivered unto your hand the host of Midian." Then, when they reached the enemy and their cry rang out over the surprised camp —"The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon"— the God-given victory was speedily theirs.

Great commanders in all ages have been ready to ascribe to God the glory for whatever was accomplished through them as His humble agents. William I, the grandfather of the present Emperor of Germany, at the close of the war with Schleswig-Holstein issued this proclamation: "It is my wish that public thanks be offered to Almighty God and to Him alone, who lent His aid to our weapons."

After the victory at Cressy, Edward III of England assembled on the battlefield his own army and all the French prisoners, and bade his chaplain give thanks and glory to God for the victory. When the chaplain repeated the words, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the glory," the King and the cavalrymen dismounted and prostrated themselves with the infantrymen as they repeated the words after him.

"My friends," said President Lincoln, "you owe me no gratitude for what I have done; and I, I may say, owe you no gratitude for what you have done; just as, in a sense, we owe no gratitude to the men who fought our battles for us. I trust that this has been for us all a work of duty. All the gratitude is due to the great Giver of all good."

Still fresh in the minds of our nation are the words of Admiral Philip after the battle off Santiago when he reverently bared his head in the hour of triumph to make acknowledgment of his belief in the help of Almighty God.

SENTENCE SERMONS

It is never too soon to get ready to do a great task. *John R. Mott.*

The great secret of success in life is to be ready when your opportunity comes. *Lord Beaconsfield.*

Man's great actions are performed in minor struggles. *Victor Hugo.*

Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And e'en an angel would be weak
Who trusted in his own. *Cowper.*

Happy and strong and brave shall we be,—able to endure all things, and to do all things,—if we believe that every day, every hour, every moment of our life is in His hands. *Henry van Dyke.*

In life's small things be resolute and great
To keep thy muscle trained; knowest thou when Fate
Thy measure takes, or when she'll say to thee,
"I find thee worthy; do this deed for me"? *James Russell Lowell.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

If God is for us, who is against us? Rom. 8. 31.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah. Zech. 4. 6.

Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall. Prov. 16. 18.

There is no king saved by the multitude of the host:
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.
Our soul waiteth for Jehovah;
He is our help and our shield. Psa. 33. 16, 20.

Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Jer. 9. 23.

For I will not trust in my bow,
Neither shall my sword save me.
In God have we made our boast all the day long,
And we will give thanks unto Thy name forever. Psa. 44. 6, 8.

Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Eph. 6. 10, 13.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Of Jesus' youth we are told that He "increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." The Greek verb προέκοπτεν, translated "increased" in the Authorized Version, and "advanced" in the Revision, means literally "cut his way forward." That is the way I must advance, cutting my way forward against all the giant sins that beset my pathway.

Each one of us has his own giants. John Bunyan has mentioned some of them: Giant Despair, Giant Grim, Giant Pagan. What are mine? Are they Giant Pride, Giant Envy, Giant Selfishness? While each one has his own giants, not every one fights with them. It must in every case be a single combat, I and my giant alone, and yet on my side fights the Helper who was with David. I shall wrestle with my giants, one by one, and say with Whittier:

"So let it be. In God's own might
I gird me for the coming fight."

When I have gained a victory over one of my giants, I will make that victory a sword of Goliath in my hand to gain a second victory over some other sin.

A religious paper by a typographical error announced that a noted evangelist would hold meetings "successfully" in such and such cities. Successively was the word intended. But was not the word "successfully" the right one to use after all; should not one expect to succeed in work for God for which he feels fitted, for the reason that God is working through him?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

On opposite heights of the valley of Elah the armies of the Israelites and of the Philistines were encamped, and morning and evening for forty days a giant Philistine named Goliath stood forth and challenged some Israelite to come and fight him. "If he kill me, then will we be your servants," he proclaimed; "but if I kill him, then shall ye be our servants." All the men of Israel were afraid of him and fled, but when David visited the camp and heard the challenge he declared that Goliath was defying "the armies of the living God," and he offered to go and fight him. Saul objected because David was "but a youth and the Philistine a man of war." David told him how he had slain a lion and a bear, and said that God who had delivered him from them would deliver him from the Philistine, and Saul gave his permission.

Saul had David clad with his apparel, helmet, coat of mail, and sword, and David made an attempt to walk in them but could not. He took them off, therefore, and armed only with his shepherd's staff and wallet and his sling in his hand, he advanced to meet the giant. On his way he picked up five smooth stones out of the bed of the brook which ran through the valley.

Goliath came to meet him, and a man bore a shield before him. He was nine feet nine inches tall, and was clad in heavy armor. Contemptuously he looked at the youthful David and his staff. "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" he asked. Then he cursed David and bragged of what he would do to him, declaring that he would give his body for birds and beasts to devour. He had come to fight with a spear and sword and javelin, David told him, but he himself came in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, and God would deliver him into his hands.

David put a stone in his sling and hurled it at Goliath with such skill and force that it sank into his forehead and he fell to the earth dead. Then David ran to him and taking the giant's sword cut off his head. The armies had been watching the combat, and when the Philistines saw that their champion was killed they fled. The Israelites pursued them to Ekron with great slaughter.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. David could not fight in Saul's armor. Each man's method must be his own.
2. The literary charm of the stories about David's youth and their religious teachings.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. How did Miriam and the other women celebrate the crossing of the Red Sea? (Ex. 15. 20, 21.) 2. How did Jephthah's daughter meet her father on his return from victory? (Judges 11. 34.) 3. What did Saul know in regard to his losing his kingdom? (1 Sam. 13. 14; 15. 28.) 4. What do the words "an evil spirit from God" mean in the tenth verse? 5. How did it happen that it was customary for David to play before Saul when the latter was in one of his dark moods? (1 Sam. 16. 14–23.) 6. What traits are shown by Saul in this lesson? (Selfishness, suspicion, jealousy, anger, hatred, murderous intention.) 7. What traits are shown by David? (Imperviousness to flattery, obedience, faithfulness, wisdom, self-restraint, trust in God.)

LESSON VII — AUGUST 16

SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

I Sam. 18. 6–16. (Read I Sam. 18; 19.) Commit vv. 14–16.

Golden Text

The Lord God is a sun and shield. Psa. 84. 11.

LESSON TEXT I Sam. 18. 6–16

6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music.

7 And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him: and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand.

11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it.* And David avoided out of his presence twice.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord *was* with him.

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

5. *Was returned.* R. V., *returned. The Philistine.* R. V., margin, *Philistines.* In the Septuagint version this verse immediately follows the 54th verse of the last chapter, and "the Philistine," accordingly, is Goliath. If we read "Philistines," the reference may be to some later warfare conducted by David, to which verse 5 may refer. *Tabrets.* R. V., *timbrels. Instruments of music.* R. V., margin, *triangles,* or, *three-stringed instruments.*

7. *Answered one another.* R. V., *sang to one another.* They were in two choruses, and sang alternately, as did Miriam and the women after the crossing of the Red Sea. (Ex. 15. 21, 22.)

8. *What can he have more but the kingdom?* Perhaps he is thinking of Samuel's words in 15. 28.

9. *Saul eyed David.* Looked at him suspiciously, enviously.

10. *The evil spirit from God came.* R. V., *an evil spirit from God came mightily. He prophesied.* R. V., margin, *he raved.* "Played the prophet by

gestures and demeanor." *Driver. As at other times.* R. V., *as he did day by day.* See 16. 16. *And there was a javelin in Saul's hand.* R. V., *and Saul had a spear in his hand.* Verses 10 and 11 are omitted in the Septuagint Version.

11. *Javelin.* R. V., *spear. With it.* Omitted in the R. V. *Avoided.* This verb in the sense of to retire, withdraw, is now obsolete. A similar attempt to kill David is told in 19. 9, 10.

13. *Made him his captain over a thousand.* His motive was probably the one given at the end of verse 17. *Went out and came in.* "A common idiom for military duty."

14. *Behaved himself wisely.* R. V., margin, *prospered.*

15. *Wherefore when.* R. V., *and when. He was afraid of him.* R. V., *He stood in awe of him.*

16. *Because.* R. V., *for.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

9. *Saul eyed David.* The eternal opposition of Light and Darkness, Love and Hate, Life and Death, is brought into sharpest relief by the juxtaposition and contrast of David and Saul. This is the key to the story. The two men are not more unlike in person than in spirit. We think of the one with his ruddy beauty and changeful eyes, and lithe, slight form, and of the other gaunt and black, his giant strength weakened, and his "goodly" face scarred with the lightnings of his passions — and as they look so they are: the one full of joyous energy, the other devoured by gloom; the one going in and out among the people and winning universal love, the other sitting moody and self-absorbed behind his palace walls; the one bringing sweet tones of trustful praise from his harp, the other shaking his huge spear in his madness; the one ready for action and prosperous in it all, the other paralyzed, shrinking from his work, and leaving the conduct of the war to the servant whom he feared; the one conscious of the divine presence making him strong and calm, the other writhing in the grip of his evil spirit, and either foaming in fury, or stiffening into torpor; the one steadily growing in power and favor with God and man, the other sinking in deeper mire, and wrapped about with thickening mists as he moves to his doom. The tragic pathos of these two lives in their fateful antagonism is the embodiment of that awful alternative of life and death, blessing and cursing, which it was the very aim of Judaism to stamp ineffaceably on the conscience. *Alexander Maclaren.*

Simeon Solomon in his picture *David and Saul* (see the picture facing Lesson IX), has attempted to make portraits of the two men without any suggestion from a model. He is justified because of the accepted general law that the face is an index of the soul. His picture is, therefore, the truest of all portraits. He paints the mind as well as the body. He makes the eye no mere organ of the vision, but the window of the soul. He reveals the man behind the face.

The picture represents the episode in which David is sent for as the one man who can charm away Saul's demon of madness. Henceforth the two men are bound up in the bundle of life together. The Bible and the picture alike represent them, side by side; Saul moody, melancholy, his great spear always by his side; David fresh from the fields, with his harp and shepherd's crook, the one bright spirit in a gloomy court. The artist has given the men tell-tale faces;

Used by Courtesy of M. De Brunoff

Copyright, 1904

DAVID HATH SLAIN HIS TEN THOUSANDS—*Tissot*

on Saul's is the blackness of despair; on David's the light of love. The picture's comment on David and Saul is that all external beauty of facial expression is born of internal spiritual beauty. *Henry E. Jackson,* in *Biblical World.*

10. *Saul had his spear in his hand.* The king was distinguished by marks of royalty not before observed in the nation. His tall spear was always by his side, in repose, at his meals, when sleeping, when in battle. He wore a diadem around his brazen helmet and a bracelet on his arm. (1 Sam. 18. 19; 19. 9; 20–23.) *Dean Stanley.*

14. *Jehovah was with him.* God being with him in all that he does, he is not only kept from retaliating on Saul, not only kept from all devices for getting rid of one who was so unjust and unkind to himself, but he is remarkably obedient, remarkably faithful, and by God's grace remarkably successful in the work given him to do. It is indeed a beautiful period of David's life — the most blameless and beautiful of any. The object of unmerited hatred, the victim of atrocious plots, the helpless object of a despot's mad and ungoverned fury, yet cherishing no trace of bitter feeling, dreaming of no violent project of relief, but going out and in with perfect loyalty, and straining every nerve to prove himself a laborious, faithful, and useful servant of the master who hated him. *W. Robertson Nicoll.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

6. *Timbrels.* The Arab women of the present day beat with their fingers a similar hand-drum or tambourine, made by stretching a piece of parchment over a hoop; and they go dancing and singing to meet the Bedouin warriors returning from a foray.

6. *Instruments of music.* Precisely what is meant by the word thus translated is not known. They may have been harps of three strings, or of triangular shape; but most authorities agree in supposing them to have been triangles. These instruments of percussion are said to have originated in Syria, and if so, may have been known to the ancient Hebrews. They were well adapted for the ringing music of a solitary triumph. *Freeman, Handbook.*

Assyrian Musicians Greeting a Conqueror

7. *The women sang one to another.* One part of the women probably sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands" and the others responded, "and David his ten thousands." This responsive chorus singing is very ancient. Over four hundred years before this Miriam had led the women in the responsive chorus of victory on the occasion of the destruction of Pharaoh's army, the men and women alternating in the song. (Ex. 15. 21.) It is supposed to have been an Egyptian custom. (See also Ezra 3. 11; Isa. 6. 3; Rev. 4. 8–11; 5. 14.) *Freeman, Handbook.*

10. *An evil spirit from God.* We speak of God as permitting evil, but in oriental thought, from God, as the source of all things and in control of all things, evil as well as good is said to come.

10. *Saul had his spear. The spear* served as a sceptre, and was the symbol

of royalty. The king held it in his hand when he sat in council (22.6) or in his house (19.9); it was kept by his side when he sat at table (20.33); and stuck in the ground by his pillow as he slept in camp (26.7). Compare the modern Arab custom. "We recognized the sheik's tent, among a group of twenty others of which the encampment consisted, by the tall spear planted against it." *Tristram, Land of Israel.*

10. *Saul cast the spear.* According to an ancient Asiatic custom, when a dart was thrown at a freedman, and he escaped from it by flight, he was thereby absolved from all allegiance to his master. Thus Saul by his murderous fury gave complete liberty to David, whose subsequent acts of war against the king could not be considered rebellion. From that hour he was no longer a subject of King Saul. *Freeman.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On the return march from the Valley of Elah the women sang the refrain which aroused Saul's jealousy. At Saul's residence in Gibeah his attempt to kill David took place.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

David took the head of Goliath with him and was brought by Abner, the captain of the host, into the presence of Saul. Jonathan, Saul's son, met him there and a beautiful friendship sprang up between the two young men. "Jonathan loved him as his own soul," it says, and in token of his love gave David his own robe, sword and bow. Saul would not let David leave his court, and he put him at the head of the men of war. David's wise course brought him success and the approval of Saul and of the people.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you remember the story of Joseph and his brothers? Why did his brothers hate him? What did they do with him? When Joseph was a slave in the house of Potiphar it is said that "his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." After Joseph was wrongly imprisoned he was brought before Pharaoh to interpret the king's dream. Was Pharaoh pleased with Joseph? You remember it said in our lesson last year that "Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is?" What did Pharaoh do for Joseph? Was it a fortunate thing for Joseph in the end that he was sold as a slave and suffered for a time in the land of Egypt? We saw that it was God's purpose that Joseph be taken to Egypt and become there second only to the Pharaoh in power, but it was the jealousy of Joseph's brothers that caused them to sell him as a slave to traders going to Egypt, and their purpose was to do evil to the brother they hated.

In the life of David we shall see that God is guarding him as he was Joseph, and that the evil which Saul means to do him because, like Joseph's brothers, he is jealous, turns out in the end to be for David's best welfare, and that through all the troublous times that come to David, he is conscious of God's presence with him and acts uprightly just as Joseph did in his troubles.

For Older Pupils. Here is David, an unknown shepherd lad at first, how shall he attain to the throne of Israel destined to be his by the Lord? Saul thinks he is aiding his own cause by the burdens he lays on David, but he is only thereby furthering God's purpose.

"Doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid
By some great love unseen, the still
Unfathomed purpose to fulfill."

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" the Wise-men of the East asked of Herod the ruler of Judea, and Herod bade them find the Child and bring him word when they had done so. But the Wise-men did not report to Herod, and he was "exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men. Whenever Herod suspected any one of designs upon his throne, he promptly put him to death. The prophecy in regard to the One who was "born King of the Jews" had come from God, but Herod did not hesitate to attempt the prevention of its fulfillment and the keeping from his throne, as he thought, of this unknown Child by putting to death all the children in and near Bethlehem.

Saul, the king of Israel, had been told by the prophet that his kingdom should be taken from him and given to another better than he, and he looked with suspicious eyes at any one likely to prove this promised successor. When once he was convinced that David was the man, he did not hesitate to attempt to render God's prophecy vain by putting David to death. From that time onward his chief ambition seems to have been to accomplish this object. His attempt is the theme of nine chapters of First Samuel.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Self-centered

Saul. The center of Saul's life was himself; from this center grew his jealousy and hatred, his murderous thoughts and his madness. There was no room in his heart for God, and God left him to himself. He could not brook the equality or preëminence of Samuel, and the prophet ceased to visit and aid him. Because David was a greater man than himself, he drove him out from the kingdom and spent long years in hunting him from place to place. Had Saul been a man like Samuel, devoted to God and to his country, rather than to the absorbing pursuit of what he deemed his own interests, he would have rejoiced in David's successes, and, after a peaceful life with David as his counsellor and helper, he might have foreseen without bitterness that David would be established on his throne and Jonathan would be "next unto him," as his unselfish son had expected because it was God's plan for the kingdom. Instead, after a life of strife and bitterness and frenzied madness, he ended his life on the field of battle by his own hand.

A traveler in Palestine was greatly impressed by the Dead Sea as a picture of selfishness. "There it lies," he said, "and with wide open mouth swallows the whole of the fresh water of the Jordan and all the snows of Hermon, and yet it is not a whit sweeter or larger for it. The Sea of Galilee receives

the river Jordan and passes it along. The Dead Sea receives but gives not. It sends out not one rill to gladden or refresh the waste around it. It is a picture of the selfish man. He takes, but never gives. He grasps all, but only for himself, and, like selfish Lot, loses all." Can you not see Saul in this picture?

A Self-centered Life. When Bishop Potter was asked if he did not admire a very fine church which he had dedicated he replied: "It is a grand church, and has only three faults; you can not see, nor hear, nor breathe in it." Selfish people are like this church, they are useless for the purpose for which they have their existence. A glimpse of such a useless life is given in a story from *The Youth's Companion:* —

It was early evening on a midwinter Cuban steamer — the last hours of a dazzling day. A group of lively people sat upon the upper deck of the steamer, watching the sudden change of the fiery sky into shadows and silver stars. Among the group was a richly dressed young woman, to whom the sea and sky and the sombre and suggestive change were of little interest.

She evidently belonged to a family that had become suddenly rich, and socially ambitious. She talked to a friend, who sat near her, in a loud voice that everybody on deck could hear; mentioned the names of well-known political and literary people whose receptions she said she had attended; described the costly style of living of families that made up her set, as she called them, and by this ill-bred garrulousness had unconsciously pictured herself as leading a superficial, frivolous and wholly selfish life.

"I could not live without society," she said to her companion. "My life is a round of pleasures and of social excitement. My nature requires it, and I intend to get the greatest enjoyment I can out of life."

"For yourself only?"

"Why yes. Of course I live for myself and to get all the gratification I can."

"Do you?" said the lady, slowly and thoughtfully. "Then will you tell me what possible excuse you have for existence?"

"Excuse?"

A silence followed. The steamer whistle blew, and a hundred voices answered it from the night-covered hills not far away. The young woman did not speak again, but she will not soon forget the significance of that word — "excuse."

The Remedy for Selfishness. "The radius of a man's life will depend on its center." The one who is self-centered has his thoughts fixed on a very small object and his view of life is narrowed to what concerns that object. The way out of this small circle into the larger life is given in this brief prayer of Whittier: —

Change the dream of me and mine
To the truth of Thee and Thine.

II Envy

The Contrast between Saul and Jonathan. Do you wonder that Saul was not pleased to hear the women of Israel extol David higher than they did him? He was the king, David was a shepherd youth whom he had elevated to a position at court, shall he rejoice to see this stripling gain a firmer hold on the affections of the people than he himself has been able to win? Very

human is Saul's anger. Only a great soul is able to see another take the place that he deems rightfully his, and not cherish wrathful thoughts and become bitterly jealous of his rival. "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me have they ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more but the kingdom?" Saul said to himself, and from that day he "eyed David," looked at him jealously and suspiciously.

Absorbed in himself, gloomy and morose, Saul's envy of David grew till he seemed to have only one fixed purpose in life, and that was to put his rival to death. Moroseness and murder seem very unequal sins, but, as we have seen in Cain, the lesser sin may lead to the greater along the pathway through jealousy's domains.

This characterization of Shakespeare's aptly applies to Saul:

Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself, and scorned a spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves.

How striking the contrast between Saul and his son Jonathan! That song in praise of David aroused no envious thoughts in his great soul. Saul told him that "as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, he should not be established, nor his kingdom," but Jonathan was content, as he told David, to have the latter king and he himself second unto him. He interceded with his father in behalf of David when Saul's anger and envy had grown into murderous thoughts: "and Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the King sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to theeward very good: for he put his life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and Jehovah wrought a great victory for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

We marvel not at Saul's envious spirit, it is too common among us all, but we see its hideousness; we marvel greatly at Jonathan's Christ-like spirit; we can not fail to see its beauty, and desire to emulate its nobleness.

How to kill Envy. Let us kill envy by starvation. And how shall we do it? By withdrawing the thought on which it feeds, and providing another kind of thought which shall be as poison. There is only one way of doing it. We must pray for those we envy. We must tell God all about it, and in these conditions the evil thing will languish away and die. We must look at the enviable one in our Master's presence, and he will become to us the lovable one. Envy is asphyxiated in the atmosphere of prayer. *J. H. Jowett.*

III Enduring Praise

David behaved himself wisely. When the women chanted their refrain, that Saul had slain his thousands and David his ten thousands, David did not lose his head because he was lauded above the king. "He behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Jehovah was with him," our record says. Let us re-arrange these clauses: Jehovah was with him, and he behaved himself wisely in all his ways; because he sought the constant sense of the presence of God, he could be praised without being injured, he could keep steadily before

him the fact that "the anointing oil of the Lord was upon him," and he was set apart for God's service, and could behave himself wisely in all his ways. As we see David playing on his harp before Saul in an effort to dispel the gloomy moroseness that has taken possession of the king's heart, we feel that, like Whittier's little girl in *School Days,* he is sorry that the women have given him the greater praise, that he "hates to go above him, because, you see, he loves him." This is the thought Browning has so wonderfully portrayed in his *Saul:*

"Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt He alone shall not help him, who yet alone can!
And could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would — knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst Thou — so wilt Thou!"

And then in prophetic vision David's thoughts turn to the one who shall throw open to Saul the gates of everlasting life:

"O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

Unwise Behavior.

"He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumphs and his loss,
Like her,— because they love him."

Thus Whittier tells us that David's spirit as portrayed in *Saul* is not the spirit of the generality of men. Their triumph they would not forego for the sake of another, their praise they must receive for the ten thousands they have slain regardless of the feelings of the one who has slain but his thousands.

Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga, was present at church when the victory was the minister's theme. It is said that after listening for some time to the minister as he ascribed all the glory to God, the general arose and remarked, "Please, Parson, I was there, too." "Sit down, thou presumptuous man," was the stern parson's rebuke.

The historian says of Cicero: "Though he loved virtuous actions, yet his virtue was accompanied with so unsuitable a thirst of the praise to which it entitled him, that his mind was unable to sustain itself without this foreign assistance, and when the praise to which he aspired for his consolation was changed into obloquy and scorn, he seems to have lost the sense of good or evil in his own conduct and character."

How Longfellow endured Praise. When the poet Longfellow visited England he was invited by the Queen to Windsor Castle and royally entertained, yet when asked on his return what honor had most pleased him he replied that an English hod-carrier had asked him as he was waiting in his carriage at Harrow if he were the author of *The Voices of the Night,* and then had asked permission to shake hands with him. "His modesty was perfect;" said Oliver Wendell Holmes, "he accepted praise as he would have accepted any other pleasant gift — glad of it as an expression of good will, but without personal elation."

Whose Praise shall we seek? If this life be a stage and we be the

players, with the world for spectators, then let us study our parts carefully, so that by our pose and speech we may every moment please our fellow-men, and earn their applause. Verily we shall have our reward. If this life be the school for the soul, and we be the sons of God, working and living continually in His presence, then let us not vex ourselves about the sound of our words upon our neighbors' ears, or the effect of our actions upon their judgment. Rather let us pray and strive that our inner self be cleansed from guile, possessed by love, and consecrated to the will of God. Whether men approve or condemn us it will be a light matter, for our judgment is with our Father which seeth in secret but rewardeth openly. *John Watson, Inspiration.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The penalty of having no interests but one's own is moroseness. *Stryker.*

Center all your thoughts on self, and you will have abundance of misery. *Charles Kingsley.*

Circumstances are beyond the control of man, but his conduct is in his own power. *Disraeli.*

The love of our neighbor is the only door out of the dungeon of self. *George Macdonald.*

Better to have the confidence and affection of your own family than to have the praise of the whole town. *John H. Vincent.*

Envy is the daughter of Pride, the author of murder and Revenge, the perpertual tormentor of Virtue. *Socrates.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Jealousy is cruel as Sheol:
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire. Song of Solomon 8. 6.

He that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes. 1 John 2. 11.

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble. Psa. 46. 1.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice. Eph. 4. 31.

Wrath is cruel, and anger is overwhelming;
But who is able to stand before jealousy? Prov. 27. 4.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Many years ago Rubenstein was playing to a company of musicians in Steinway Hall, and with one accord they broke out in applause at the close of a brilliant improvisation. "Friends," exclaimed the great musician, "please do not applaud! Your applause directs my thoughts from the music to myself, and I can not play." The one whose heart is turned in on itself can never make beautiful music for others. One who is exclusively occupied with his own feelings and wants can have little regard for the feelings and wants of others. I will ask God's help in putting self out of my heart.

A foreigner once said that "All an American girl wants is a box of choco-

late creams and a compliment." Does his scathing remark seem at all justifiable?

Am I ever morose or angry? Do I bring sunshine or cloud into my home? Is there any one whom I hate? There is a fable that at twilight a great bell in heaven peals forth wondrous music, and any one on earth may hear it if he has put away from his soul all strife and envy and hatred.

"So, then, let us ponder a little — let us look to our hearts and see
If the twilight bell of the angels could ring for you and me."

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

It was customary for the women of Israel to come out from the cities by which the warriors returned from a successful battle, and celebrate the victory with music and dancing and singing. On one occasion they came to greet Saul their king, but their words were far from pleasing to him, for after one chorus of women had sung, "Saul hath slain his thousands," another chorus sang still more exultantly, "and David his ten thousands." "What can David have more than the kingdom?" questioned the jealously angry monarch. David must be the man better than he, to whom his kingdom should be given as the prophet had foretold, he seemed to think, and from this day onward he looked at David with jealousy and suspicion.

On the morrow Saul was in a state of violent frenzy. The historian, in his belief that God has control of all things, ascribes his trouble to "an evil spirit from God." The trouble with Saul was due to what Robert Burns has aptly termed "a confusion of the head arising from a corruption of the heart." Saul's hatred of David had grown till murderous thoughts filled his heart, and when David played on his harp before him, as he was wont to do, "Saul the mistake, Saul the failure, the ruin," as Browning calls him, twice hurled his spear at his would-be comforter. David escaped, and Saul was the more afraid of him "because Jehovah was with him and was departed from Saul."

Having failed to get rid of David by direct means, the king next tried an indirect method; he appointed David captain over a thousand, hoping either that he would be slain in battle or that his inexperience would draw down upon him the wrath of the soldiers. Not only did Saul fail in his purpose, but he increased the popularity of David by this means, for the young captain "behaved himself very wisely, the Lord was with him, and all loved him."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Saul as a psychological study.
2. The harm one may do another by ill-timed or injudicious praise.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What is said about the beginning of the friendship between David and Jonathan in 1 Sam. 18. 1–4? 2. What is said about Jonathan's interceding for David in 1 Sam. 19. 1–7? 3. Read the entire 20th chapter. 4. What was said at the last meeting of these two friends? (1 Sam. 23. 15–18.) 5. What did David say about Jonathan's love in 2 Sam. 1. 26? 6. What attracted the two young men to each other? 7. For what reasons might Jonathan have been jealous of David? 8. Read all that is told in 1 Samuel about Jonathan.

FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN

I Sam. 20. (Read I Sam. 18. 1–5; 19. 1–7; 23. 14–18.) Commit v. 42.

Golden Text

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Prov. 17. 17.

LESSON TEXT I Sam. 20. 30–42

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman,* do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

31 For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee?

38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

41 *And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a *place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

30. *The perverse.* R. V., *a perverse.* "The Hebrew is doubtful. It may mean *son of depravity* or *perversion,* or, after the Greek, *son of an escaped slave girl.* It is not intended, however, to reflect at all on the mother, but only on the person addressed." *Kent. To thine own confusion.* R. V., *to thine own shame.* Jonathan's friendship for David was a disgrace to him in the father's eyes.

31. ***Thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom.*** Saul naturally wished

Jonathan to succeed him as king of Israel, but of course his right of succession, as oldest or favorite son, had not been established, and the father feared David's popularity would give him the throne. *He shall surely die.* R. V., margin, *he is worthy to die;* Hebrew, *he is a son of death.*

32. *Slain.* R. V., *put to death.*

33. *A javelin.* R. V., *his spear. To smite him.* Saul's anger was beyond control. *Jonathan knew.* What he had before been unwilling to admit to himself; compare verse 9. *To slay David.* R. V., *to put David to death.*

34. *Meat.* R. V., *food. For he was grieved for David.* This is omitted in one version. The "shame" was done to Jonathan, but Jonathan's noble heart may have overlooked his own treatment and dwelt only on David's danger.

35. *At the time appointed with David.* R. V., margin, *to the place.* See verses 19–23.

36. *Find out now.* R. V., *find now. Beyond him.* R. V., margin, *making it pass over him.* Jonathan shot one or more arrows (verse 20) and sent the boy after them, and while the boy was running to the place where they fell ("the place" mentioned in verse 37), he shot an arrow that flew over his head and fell beyond him (verse 22).

38. *Jonathan cried after the lad.* The words were spoken to the lad but intended for David, who was in hiding (verse 24).

40. *Artillery.* R. V., *weapons. David arose out of a place toward the South.* The Septuagint version reads, *David arose from beside the mound.* Compare verse 19. "Verses 40–42 are an editorial expansion, pure and simple." *Smith. Bowed himself three times.* Compare Jacob's deference to Esau, Gen. 33. 3.

42. *We have sworn both of us.* Verses 16, 17, 23. *The Lord be.* R. V., *Jehovah shall be.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

31. *As long as the son of Jesse liveth, thou shalt not be established.* The reed that bends its head to a breath of wind, and the old gray rock that withstands the hurricane that strews the plain with trees and the foaming shore with wrecks, are not more unlike than Jonathan where his own interests, and the same Jonathan where David's interests were concerned. Such was the depth and power of his affection for his friend. Here neither Saul's entreaties, nor anger, nor violence, could move him. He would part with life to please his father, but not with his love for David. When Saul, to the astonishment of the host, proposed to sacrifice his son to a rash and wicked vow, Jonathan neither made resistance nor remonstrance. But when Saul threatens David's life, he refuses obedience, and becomes the advocate of his friend, and pleads with his father. Saul makes many attempts to awaken Jonathan's jealousy, and kindle in his son's bosom the hatred that burned and raged in his own. But they are vain. Nor does he succeed any better when all his pent-up passions burst forth in volcanic fury on discovering that David, the object of his hatred, is to be the successor to the throne. In that discovery he flatters himself he holds a spell of power to turn Jonathan's love into the bitterest hatred, and raise all the devil in his son. But there was no devil to raise. The dreadful secret is revealed; but whatever pain is inflicted, whatever struggle it cost, it kindles no bad passions in that pious, generous, and loving heart. *Guthrie.*

31. *He shall surely die.* That David should have become the worst treated

and most persecuted man of his day; that for years and years he should have been maligned and hunted down, with but a step between him and death; that the very services that ought to have brought him honor should have plunged him into disgrace, and the noble qualities that ought to have made him the king's most trusted counsellor should have made him a fugitive and an outlaw from his presence,—all this is very strange. Why was he doomed to a mode of life that seemed more suitable for a miscreant than for the man after God's own heart?

It pleased God, in infinite love, to make David pass through a long time of hard discipline and salutary training for the office to which he was to be raised. We do not need to illustrate the benefits that arise from a man bearing the yoke in his youth. What story is more constantly repeated than, on the one hand, that of the young man succeeding to a fortune in early life, learning every wretched habit of indolence, and self-indulgence, and after a miserable life sinking into a dishonest grave? And on the other hand, how often do we find, in the biography of the men who have been an honor to their race, that their early life was spent amid struggles and acts of self-denial that seem hardly credible, but out of which came their resolute character and grand conquering power? *W. Robertson Nicoll,* in *Expositor's Bible.*

41. *David exceeded.* The prime gain of friendship is just the knowledge of a noble soul. That was what Jonathan felt. David won Jonathan's heart on the day when he stood revealed in all the riches of his regal nature — that day when Goliath was slain. David was proved to be the grandest man of Israel, fullest of patriotism and beauty, courage and skill, and all his qualities were adorned and set off by his humility. As you read the subsequent history of that friendship you are very apt to think that David was the gainer, for Jonathan was a perfect miracle of tenderness, and was never weary of sacrificing himself for the interests of his friend; yet I conceive that that would be false judgment. I am certain of this, that Jonathan would not have agreed to it. David was by far the most splendid nature, and I expect that is what determines which is the gainer in a friendship. It is the man who has most in himself to give who gives most, not the man who has most of what is external to give. *James Stalker.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

30. *He said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman.* This is a favorite oriental mode of abuse. It is supposed that an indignity offered to a man's mother will give him greater pain than one offered to himself. "Strike me," said the servant of Mungo Park, "but do not curse my mother." Sir W. Ouseley tells of a man, who, seeking for wine, put to his lips a bottle of nauseous medicine, and immediately cursed, not the man who made the disgusting draught, but all the female relatives in whose welfare he had the greatest interest; his wives, mother, daughters, and sisters. *Burder, Oriental Customs.*

There are some traces of this form of abuse, in principle, among the least refined portion of our own population; but in the East no man is too high or too refined to be above it. Even a son will abuse his brother by casting contumely upon his mother, regardless of the fact that she is also his own mother, and whom, as such, he venerates and loves. The mother herself is not held to be affronted in such cases, but the son who hears such words applied to her is

insulted, and is meant to be insulted, beyond expiation. *Kitto, Illustrations.*

41. *They kissed one another.* The custom of embracing and kissing among men seems strange to us, but it is not uncommon in other lands to-day, in Germany and France as well as in the Orient.

42. *Jonathan dismissed David with a reminder of their covenant.* The Bedouin also says: "There is none between us but Allah." *H. P. Smith.*

When the two young men entered into their covenant of life-friendship, they sealed it in a very characteristic Eastern way, by the giving and receiving of garments. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his

Orientals Saluting by Kissing and Falling on the Face

girdle. It was typical of that surrender of himself in love and service which Jonathan that day made. *Robert Tuck.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is at first in the king's residence at Gibeah, and then in the country near by.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After promising his elder daughter Merab to David for his wife, Saul gave her to another. If he hoped David would seek revenge and commit some treasonable act, he was disappointed. Michal, Saul's younger daughter, loved David, and the king agreed that she should become David's wife on condition that, in lieu of the customary dowry given to the father of the bride, he should kill a hundred Philistines. Saul hoped that David would perish in the attempt, but he was successful in the commission given him. Michal became his wife, and thus David was raised to a position as prince of the royal family second in rank to that of Jonathan. His popularity increased, and with it the king's hatred of him. Saul openly sought David's life, and even commanded Jonathan

and his servants to kill him. Jonathan reasoned with his father, and Saul professed that he would spare David's life. A second time Saul himself sought to kill David with his spear (or else there are two accounts of the same occurrence), but David escaped and fled to his home. Saul set a watch over David's house, but with the assistance of his wife he escaped through a window and fled to Samuel at Ramah. To deceive Saul's messengers, Michal put an image (teraphim) in the bed and said David was sick, and not till Saul ordered David to be brought to him on his bed was the deception discovered.

When Saul learned that David was at Naioth in Ramah he sent messengers to take him there, but when they reached the company of prophets they were seized with the prophetic frenzy, as were also other messengers sent and at last the king himself. David returned to court and sought Jonathan.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In France there was once a convict who gave his keepers a great deal of trouble. He was always sullen and sometimes violent. Suddenly his manner changed, and he was seen to smile often, and to look down at his coat pocket. His guards became uneasy, fearing he had in some way secured a weapon, and two of them overpowered and searched him. You could never guess what it was they found — a large rat! The convict had tamed and made a pet of it, and when it was taken from him he begged for its life. The rat was allowed to escape, and the convict was again sullen as before. Then one day the guard who was overseeing the men at their work heard this man utter a cry of joy, and saw the lost rat on his shoulder. Eagerly he begged to be allowed to keep it, promising never again to give any trouble; the permission was given and he became a changed man, one of the best in prison. In his spare time he made toys to sell so as to buy sugar and other things for his pet.

Every one needs some friend whom he can love, and when a man like this convict can have no human friend he can sometimes find happiness in the companionship of a pet as undesirable even as a rat.

We have become much interested in the life of David, the young man who in his youth took care of his father's sheep, and for long weeks at a time had no companions near save only those dumb animals. Then we have seen him at court, the friend of the king, and now we have come to the story of the day when he was obliged to flee and hide from the king. During his life at court he had gained the friendship of the king's son, one of the noblest young men the Bible or any other book has told us about.

For Older Pupils. You recall the classic story of Damon and Pythias, those friends who were so anxious to die for each other. Damon was condemned to death by Dionysius, and received permission to return home and put his affairs in order while Pythias remained his surety, agreeing to suffer death himself should Damon fail to return. The day appointed for Damon's death arrived and Pythias was about to be executed when Damon rushed breathless upon the scene. Pythias had been rejoicing that unfavorable winds had detained his friend and he could die for him, and Damon had been tormented with the fear that he might not arrive in time to save Pythias. So surprised was Dionysius at such devotion that he freed Damon and begged to share in their loyal friendship.

Most unique of all noted friendships is that of Jonathan and David, for it was a friendship in which the one grappled the other to his heart with hoops of steel, although that other was his rival to the throne.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Control of Anger

The Tragedy of Saul's Life. It is long since Saul has made any effort to control his anger. When he became convinced that his son was taking David's part, "his anger was kindled," and so fierce was the flame that he reviled Jonathan's mother, his own wife, and tried to kill Jonathan, his own son. Saul's life is a tragedy, the tragedy of a man capable of nobility of character and of great service for his kingdom, giving loose reins to his selfishness and evil temper till his only ambition is to hunt and kill "a partridge on a mountain." When a lion is angry he is sometimes so occupied with the violent manifestations of his anger — shaking his mane and flogging his sides with his tail — that he gives his would-be prey time to make good his escape. In like manner Saul's loss of self-control and his violent display of anger to his son, allowed his would-be prey, David "the partridge," to escape, for Jonathan was convinced at last of his father's fixed purpose and warned David to flee.

The Danger in Yielding to Anger. An outburst of temper is sometimes spoken of as if it were of little consequence; the manifestations of anger in a little child are even encouraged and laughed at. "It was only my hasty temper, you knew I meant nothing," is an excuse sometimes heard for bitter words. Do the words hurt the less because you know the speaker will be ashamed of them when his outburst is over? Every time you lose your patience, every time you permit yourself to speak irritable words, you are making it easier to commit these so-called trifling sins again; every time you yield to your anger you are making it easier to yield the next time passion seizes you, and angry passions will come with increasingly greater frequency, till you make life almost unendurable for yourself and for all around you. There are white ants, or termites, in the tropics that tunnel their way through trees or woodwork and leave only the thinnest shell. They have been known to enter an unused house and so thoroughly riddle the furniture that, although tables and chairs and other pieces of furniture looked as if untouched, the slightest strain upon them made them collapse. Just as destructive is anger in its working; the character which we may think is still strong has been so weakened by these uncontrolled fits of anger that it collapses under extra provocation. To what lengths anger may lead we see in Saul's life story.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty.

Anger a Sign of Weakness. A gentleman who one day lost his temper over some blunder of a workman, and spoke his mind, not only freely but violently, that night professed himself ashamed of the outbreak.

"Oh, well, papa, I dare say he didn't mind," said a too aristocratic listener. "Those people are probably used to being abused by their superiors."

"I'm not his superior," said the gentleman testily. "I was very palpably his inferior this afternoon. I lost my temper and he kept his. I rated him like a fishwife, and though he looked as if he would have liked to knock me down, he answered me every time with perfect politeness." *The Youth's Companion.*

II The Need of Friends

Jonathan the Generous. The friendship between Jonathan and David began after David had slain Goliath. Jonathan recognized the bravery of David's deed, almost single-handed he himself had stormed the fortress of Michmash, and David was a man after his own heart.

As the devoted friendship of the two young men is shown in the Bible narrative, we marvel at the disinterestedness of Jonathan. David's love did not conflict with his interests, but Jonathan's interests were all against his love. Nothing could better express the attitude of Jonathan's mind, says Dr. Matheson, "than the words 'Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.' It is a typical statement; it describes in one sentence the whole trend of his heart. From beginning to end, the love of Jonathan for David was a disrobing, a divestiture." It is only a noble nature that can love a friend who is a rival and whose success means one's own defeat.

God's Good Gift. "All faithful friends went on a pilgrimage years ago, and none of them has ever come back," said a Puritan preacher. What a bitter experience must have been his! It takes two to form a friendship as well as to make a quarrel, but fortunately there are few in this world so unsocial or so crabbed as not to know the need of having a friend; while almost every one will agree with Lucy Larcom that

"Life offers no joy like a friend:
Fulfilment and prophecy blend
In the throb of a heart with our own—
A heart where we know and are known."

When Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer died the papers commented on the work she had accomplished as President of Wellesley College, as a member of the Massachusetts Board of Education, as President of the Women's Educational Association at Chicago, and as Dean of the Woman's Department of the University of Chicago; they spoke, too, of her remarkable tact and winning personality; but one paper, at least, rightly referred a large part of her power to her wonderful "genius for friendship." Happy are they who possess a similar genius for friendship, for it is one of God's best gifts.

The Friend above all Others. Companionship is the one thing in the world which is absolutely essential to happiness. The human heart needs fellowship more than anything else, fellowship which is elevated and enduring, stronger and purer than itself, and centered in that which death can not change. All its springs are in God. Without Him life is a failure and all beyond is a blank. There is absolutely nothing that man can not do without, except God. With Him happiness is possible anywhere and always. In deepest perils and darkest prisons, in the languor of sickness and the loneliness of sorrow, in the narrow house of poverty and the fiery furnace of pain, on the cross of disgrace and the black shadow of death, men and women have been happy because God was with them. We talk of our possessions—of what we own. What are they all compared with the presence and friendship of God? *Henry van Dyke.*

O thou, the first, the greatest Friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling-place. *Robert Burns.*

III The Power of Friends

A Brother is born for Adversity. Ovid in exile tells you that "while you are in prosperity you will be able to count many friends, but if sad days come, you will be alone. See how the doves build in the new towers while the old roof has not a single bird. You will never see ants filing along to an empty storehouse, nor friendship journeying toward one who has lost his wealth. As the shadow attends only when the sun is shining brightly and goes away at the coming of a cloud, thus the crowd will follow while one's day is bright, but when clouds come it will disappear." Because it has been the sad experience of many to lose when the clouds came those whom they counted their friends in bright days, Ovid's words are none the less untrue. The friends who desert one in adversity were never genuine friends in prosperity; they were like those followers who never truly loved Jesus but followed Him only for the loaves and fishes.

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity, says our Golden Text. This Naomi found true of her friend Ruth; and David found true of his friend Jonathan.

Inspiring Friendship. "What is the secret of your life?" asked Mrs. Browning of Charles Kingsley, "Tell me, that I may make mine beautiful, too." "I had a friend," was his reply. As we look back upon the friendships of former days, or thoughtfully consider those that gladden our hearts at the present time, we find that they have been valuable to us, not only because they have given us pleasure, or comfort, but because they have been to us an inspiration.

A Friend is one who makes us do what we can, says Emerson. The Emperor of Japan has expressed somewhat the same thought in a poem translated by Mr. Arthur Lloyd:—

Be ever careful in your choice of friends,
And let your special love be given to those
Whose strength of character may prove the whip
That drives you ever to fair Wisdom's goal.

A Chinese philosopher has given another characteristic of a true friend in his definition of friendship — the Heaven-ordained relationship, on which depends the correction of one's character. There is a German poet who has amplified this thought:

"The friend who holds a mirror to my face,
And hiding none, is not afraid to trace
My faults, my smallest blemishes within,
Who friendly warns, reproves me if I sin —
Although it seems not so — he is my friend."

SENTENCE SERMONS

The only way to have a friend is to be one. *Emerson.*

Friendship is a strong and habitual inclination in two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other. *Addison.*

Your tongue is your horse; if you guard it, it will guard you, but if it runs away with you, then you are lost. *Arab Proverb.*

Without good nature man is but a better kind of vermin. *Bacon.*

If a friend is one who summons us to our best, then is not Jesus Christ our best Friend? *M. D. Babcock.*

If thou knowest thou hast a friend
Whom thou well canst trust,
Go oft to visit him;
For with brushwood overgrown
And with high grass
Is the way that no one treads. *The Edda.*

I will choose a friend who can do me many kindnesses if I need them — I mean such kindnesses which make me wiser and which make me better. *Jeremy Taylor.*

No friendship will abide the test
That stands on sordid interest
And mean self-love erected. *Cowper.*

I count myself in nothing else so happy as in a soul remembering my good friends. *Shakespeare.*

True religion is a close personal friendship with the Lord Jesus. *Andrew Murray.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. Jas. 1. 26.

I said, I will take heed to my ways,
That I sin not with my tongue;
I will keep my mouth with a bridle. Psa. 39. 1.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not. Prov. 27. 10.

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. Prov. 27. 17.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Prov. 18. 24.

Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. John 15. 14.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

For me the only world to conquer is the world within myself. Now is the time that I must control my temper that I may not have angry words to recall with sorrow in later years, and that my future self may be free from the tyranny of an uncontrolled temper.

Have you never held a piece of ribbon grass in your hand and rubbing it one way found it smooth as a piece of satin, but rubbing it the other way found it full of little prickers? Have you never known how easy it is in the companionship of certain ones to show only your good qualities, while in the presence of others you are strangely tempted to be perverse and uncomfortable if not worse? Have you ever noticed what effect you yourself have upon others, and have you consciously tried to be the friend who calls out only another's good qualities, who helps him to do and to be the best that it is possible for him to be and to do?

Is my friendship with Christ as real an experience as it may be? Am I as anxious to serve Him as Jonathan was to serve his friend? What did I do for Him this last week? What can I do for Him this coming week? Will I do it?

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

David knew that Saul was determined to kill him and this he told Jonathan, Saul's son. Jonathan said that his father did nothing without telling him of it, but David told him his father knew that they loved each other, and therefore hid his purpose from him. The two friends entered into a covenant together, and formed a plan for communicating with each other after Jonathan had learned his father's will regarding David.

David hid in the field, expecting that his absence from Saul's table at the time of the new moon, which was a religious festival, would cause Saul to speak to Jonathan about him. The king inquired where David was, and Jonathan made an excuse for him. At once Saul's anger flamed and he spoke insulting words to his son, telling him that as long as David lived he (Jonathan) would not attain to the throne, and demanding that David be brought before him that he might kill him. Jonathan attempted to intercede for David, and Saul in his ungoverned passion hurled his spear at him. Convinced now that his father was determined to kill David, grieved for David and righteously angry at his father, Jonathan left the table. The next morning he took a lad with him and went to the field where David was in hiding. There he shot a few arrows and sent the lad to gather them up and while the boy was running he shot an arrow over his head and called out, "Is not the arrow beyond thee? Make speed, haste, stay not." The words were spoken to the boy, but were intended to warn David that he must flee, in accordance with the plan they had made.

The boy collected the arrows and Jonathan sent him back to the city with his weapons. Finding that it was safe to meet for a farewell, David came forth from his hiding place and the two loyal friends kissed and wept together and recalled the covenant of friendship they had sworn the one with the other. Then Jonathan returned to the city, and David began his lonely life as a fugitive hunted from place to place.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The character of Jonathan.

2. The ethical value of the Old Testament. "It shows us characters and deeds of moral power; it has commands of righteousness that the world has not yet learned; it has practical precepts that may teach us wisdom; it has songs and prayers that make us better men."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read an account of David's sparing Saul's life given in 1 Sam. 24. 2. What was the cause of Saul's hatred of David? 3. What is meant by "the inheritance of the Lord," verse 19? (See Ex. 15. 17; Deut. 22. 9; 1 Sam. 10. 1.) 4. On what earlier occasions did Saul profess penitence? (1 Sam. 15. 24; 24. 17.) Did his deeds afterwards prove his repentance was genuine or lasting? Why did not David trust him? 5. Read Psalm 42, entitled "Thirsting for God in Trouble and Exile," and Psalm 143, entitled "Prayer for Deliverance and Guidance." 6. Read what Paul says about obedience to rulers in Rom. 13. 1–7. 7. What does Prov. 25. 21, 22 say about the way in which to overcome an enemy?

LESSON IX — AUGUST 30

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

I Sam. 26. (Read I Sam. 21–25.) Commit v. 21.

Golden Text

Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you. Luke 6. 27.

LESSON TEXT I Sam 26. 17-25.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It* is my voice, my lord, O king.

18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?

19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they* be the children of men, cursed *be* they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods.

20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23 The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed.

24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25 Then Saul said to David, Blessed *be* thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

17. *Is this thy voice.* It was too dark to see him from afar (verse 13), but the king recognized his voice (verses 14–16). *My son David.* An affectionate term.

18. *Thus pursue.* R. V., *pursue.*

19. *If the Lord has stirred.* R. V., *If it be Jehovah that hath stirred.* See 16. 14. *But if they be.* R. V., *but if it be. From abiding in the inheritance.* R. V., *that I should not cleave unto the inheritance.* R. V., margin, *have no share in.* The "inheritance of Jehovah" was the land of Israel. See 1 Sam. 10. 1; Ex. 15. 17; Deut. 32. 9; Hos. 9. 3. *Saying, Go serve other gods.* Not that "the children of men" used these words, but in driving him away from their land they made him serve other gods, is David's thought.

20. *Before the face of the Lord.* R. V., *away from the presence of Jehovah.* Where he will not avenge his death, is the thought. *A flea.* See 24. 14. Da-

vid thus expresses the thought that he is insignificant compared with Saul.

21. *My soul.* R. V., *my life. Was precious in thine eyes this day.* See verses 7–16.

22. *Behold the king's spear!* R. V., *Behold the spear, O king! And let.* R. V., *let then.*

23. *The Lord render.* R. V., *and Jehovah will render.* His own right dealing with Saul will be recompensed by the Lord. See Psa. 7.8. *For.* R. V., *forasmuch as. But I would not stretch forth mine hand.* R. V., *and I would not put forth my hand.*

24. *Much set by.* Much valued, held in high esteem. *Let him deliver me.* See Psa. 34.17; 54.7.

25. *Thou shalt do great things and also shalt still prevail.* R. V., *Thou shalt do mightily, and shalt surely prevail. Went on his way.* R. V., *went his way. His place.* His home, Gibeah.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

19 *and* 20. These verses are of great interest as throwing light upon some aspects of religious belief among the early Hebrews. David can account for Saul's persistent enmity only by one or other of two hypotheses. Either it is due to the direct instigation of Jehovah, in which case an offended deity can always be placated by the smell (note the margin of the Revised Version) of a sacrifice, an antique conception found also in Gen. 8.21, or it is the result of the influence upon Saul of some slander-mongering "children of men." On these David invokes the curse of God, the issue of which is death. Nothing less is sufficient for men by whom David is being driven out like another Cain "from the presence of Jehovah." For a distinctive feature of the early Semitic religion is the belief here so clearly illustrated, that each deity had his own land, beyond which his power and influence, and therefore his worship, did not extend. For David, Jehovah is, of course, the only legitimate object of worship within the territory of Israel, "the inheritance of Jehovah" (1 Kings 8.53), but the existence of other gods is also implied. *A. R. S. Kennedy.*

19. *Go, serve other gods.* In ancient times a stranger must attach himself to some tribe or family in order to be protected. But attachment to a tribe or family meant partaking in its *sacra*—its religious rites; for this was what constituted a tribe's distinction, or that of a family. Hence the stranger who went to a foreign country must perforce take part in the religion of the country and serve its gods. A great deal has been made of David's expression "They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord (that is, the land of Israel) saying, Go serve other gods." According to these words, abiding in another land is equivalent to serving other gods. The phraseology rests merely on the fact that in foreign lands other gods were worshipped; it contains no proof that other gods had any reality. At most it might be supposed to imply that Jehovah was God only of Israel, but could not be found in foreign lands. It is possible that the phrase might have had this meaning, but it had no such sense in Jeremiah's days, for he counsels the exiles to pray for the peace of the land of their exile. *A. B. Davidson.*

23. *I would not put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed.* What an admirable spirit of self-restraint and patience David showed in being willing to bear all the risk and pain of a most distressing position, until it should please

David and Saul—*Simeon Solomon*

God to bring to him the hour of deliverance. Into how many sins have men been betrayed through unwillingness to wait for God's time! A young man embarks in the pursuit of commerce; but the gains to be derived from ordinary business come in far too slowly for him; he makes haste to be rich, engages in gigantic speculations, plunges into frightful gambling, and in a few years brings ruin on himself and all connected with him. How many sharp transactions continually occur just because men are impatient, and wish to hurry on some consummation which their hearts are set on! Have not murders often taken place just to hasten the removal of some who occupied places that others were eager to fill? *W. R. Nicoll, Expositor's Bible.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

20. *The King is come out to seek a flea.* There are at this moment myriads of men, women, and children chasing these nimble creatures through all the mysteries and hiding places of their manifold garments. The Arabs, in their poetry, fables, stories, and general literature, not only mention the flea, but with every possible term of dislike and malediction. The Bedouin has the greatest dread of fleas, and whenever they appear in their camp they break up and remove to another. I have seen places where Arabs had been encamped literally swarming with them, as though the very dust had turned to fleas. An Arab proverb informs us that the king of the fleas holds his court in Tiberias. *W. M. Thomson, The Land and the Book.*

20. *As when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.* David alludes to the mode of chase practised now as of old, when the partridge continuously chased was at length, when fatigued, knocked down by sticks thrown along the ground. It must be remembered that both the species of partridge common in the Holy Land, unlike our bird, endeavor to save themsleves by running in preference to flight, unless when suddenly startled, and that they are not inhabitants of plains or cornfields but of rocky hill-sides. *Tristram.*

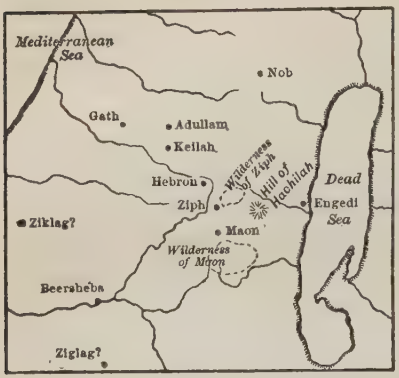
22. *Behold the spear.* I noticed at all the encampments which we passed that the sheik's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the ground in front of it; and it is the custom, when a party is out on an excursion for robbery or for war, that when they halt to rest, the spot where the chief reclines or sleeps is thus designated. No one ventures to travel over these deserts without his cruse of water (verses 12 and 16), and it is very common to place one at the "bolster," so that the owner can reach it during the night. The Arabs eat their dinner in the evening, and it is generally of such a nature as to create thirst, and the quantity of water which they drink is enormous. The cruse is therefore in perpetual demand. *Thomson, The Land and the Book.*

Spear and Cruse

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The conversation in our lesson was held in the wilderness near Ziph. The diagram, page 356, shows the haunts of David during his life as an outlaw.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



In the five chapters between the last lesson and this, various incidents in the life of David as an outlaw are narrated. At Nob, near Jerusalem, he sought out Ahimelech the priest, and obtained from him the shew bread to eat and Goliath's sword, which he had won and put away in the sanctuary. Doeg the Edomite was present, and when later he reported to Saul the service the priest had rendered David, Saul caused Ahimelech to be slain together with all the other priests and the people of Nob. Abiathar only, one of his sons, escaped to David.

From Nob David fled to Achish, the king of Gath, and there feigned madness, fearing the king. Escaping to the cave of Adullam he became the leader there of a band of his own kindred and of some four hundred outlaws. After taking his parents to Moab for safety, he returned to the land of Judah. With his band of valiant men, now grown to six hundred, he rescued the town of Keilah from the Philistines, but fearing the pursuit of Saul left for the wilderness of Ziph. Here Jonathan came to see him and bade him fear not: "Thou shalt be king over Israel and I shall be next unto thee," said his great-hearted friend. The Ziphites betrayed David's hiding place to the king, and Saul came in pursuit, but was recalled to fight the Philistines, and David took refuge at En-gedi. At En-gedi David spared Saul's life when Saul was in his power.

The death of the prophet Samuel is told. Next are narrated David's request for food from Nabal, because he and his men had afforded Nabal's shepherds protection, Nabal's curt refusal, his wife Abigail's gifts and intercession, the death of Nabal and David's marriage to Abigail. He also married Ahinoam of Zezreel. Meanwhile Saul had given Michal, David's wife, to one of his men.

Again the Ziphites sought out Saul in Gibeah and told him that David was hiding in their wilderness, and with three thousand men Saul came to capture him.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Who can tell the story of Gideon's visit to the Midianite camp (one of our last year's lessons), where he heard a man telling a dream? What was the dream about? Who did his companion tell him was the cake of barley bread? With what weapons did Gideon's army make the attack on their enemy, and what was the result of the battle? We saw Gideon accompanied by only his servant leaving his own camp on the height, going down into the valley of Zezreel and stealthily approaching the enemy's camp, picking his way carefully to avoid awakening any one. We have a lesson to-day which reminds us somewhat of Gideon's daring venture. David with only one man with him, has made his way over the hills where as a shepherd youth he hunted lions and bears, has stolen quietly into his enemy's camp where Saul the king is sleeping, and without arousing any one has stolen away just as quietly and left

the king unharmed. What did he bear away with him as proof of his visit?

For Older Pupils. A missionary in the Philippine Islands has told how his meetings were disturbed night after night by stones thrown by a mob of Filipinos with a priest at their head. Finally the priest was caught and brought to him. "What shall we do with him?" they asked, thinking no punishment could be too severe, but the missionary advised them to let him go. "But he is the ringleader of the mob," they exclaimed in astonishment, as they reluctantly obeyed his words. The priest, too, was astonished, and overcome by such magnanimous treatment he came quietly to their meetings; then finally joined their cause. David's magnanimous treament of his enemy Saul, which we study to-day, moved the king to a seeming repentance indeed, but David knew him so well that he was convinced that it was only a passing impulse, and that Saul would hate him all the more afterwards because he had been forced to see how unjust was all his persecution of him.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Magnanimity

David's Magnanimity. The word *magnanimous* is composed of two Latin words, *magnus,* great, and *animus,* mind. A magnanimous person is a great-minded person. The definitions given by Webster are: great of mind, elevated in soul or in sentiment; raised above what is low, mean, or ungenerous; of lofty and courageous spirit. Do not all these phrases describe David? Great as David's life proves him to have been as a statesman, priest, prophet, and king, our feelings are not touched by any of the qualities shown in these relationships as they are by the simple greatness of soul shown in his endurance of Saul's persecutions and in his generous sparing of Saul when in his power. Even when Abishai urged that it was God who had delivered his enemy into his hand, David would not take advantage of the opportunity to slay him. Such self-restraint, such elevation of soul above what was low or ungenerous, such magnanimous treatment of an enemy at a time when Saul's slaughter of the priests at Nob, because one of them had befriended one whom he considered his enemy, was much more in accordance with the spirit of the age, is indeed marvelous. David's victory over Goliath and the Philistines, and even all his victories combined are lesser triumphs than his victory over the spirit of revenge.

Love your Enemies. During the Russo-Japanese War, Colonel Jokoka was captured by the Russians when about to blow up a bridge on the Manchurian railway. He accepted his death penalty without a murmur. "I became a Christian when a boy," he said, "and now it is permitted me to do the first truly Christian act of my life. I wish to give the money I have with me, about a thousand rubles, to the Russian Red Cross, to be used for our wounded enemies." The Russian commandant was deeply moved, and remonstrated with him, suggesting that he give the money to the Japanese Red Cross work or to his family, but the Japanese Colonel was firm in his purpose that it should be used for his enemies, and the commandment accepted the money. When asked what final request he had to make before his execution, Colonel Jokoka asked to see a chaplain, and the Russian regimental pope was sent for, as there was no Protestant minister in camp. He asked the priest to read the Sermon on the

Mount. When these words were reached — If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans do the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? — the prisoner closed his Japanese Bible in which he had been following the reader, and after a few moments of silent prayer received the fatal bullets.

Forgiveness.

My heart was heavy, for my trust had been
Abused, its kindness answered with foul wrong;
So, turning gloomily from my fellow-men,
One summer Sabbath day I strolled among
The green mounds of the village burial place;
Where, pondering how all human love and hate
Find one sad level; and how, soon or late,
Wronged and wrong does, each with meekened face,
And cold hands folded over a still heart,
Pass the green threshold of a common grave,
Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart,
Awed for myself, and pitying my race,
Our common sorrow, like a mighty wave,
Swept all my pride away, and I forgave. *Whittier.*

II Reverence for Others

The Virtue of Reverence. Reverence has been defined as that spiritual susceptibility of our nature by which we touch and realize the sacred in life. "I would not put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed," said David. "David takes seriously the divinity that doth hedge a king," remarks Dr. Smith. "Saul is to him 'the anointed of Jehovah,' a consecrated person whom to harm would be sacrilege."

Does David's reverence for the king despite Saul's personal unworthiness, seem somewhat strange? Certainly it is most unusual to see in our country any proof of genuine reverence for a man because of his office, regardless of his personal worth. We honor in our soldiers, not their worth as individuals, but their patriotism; should we not honor in our rulers, whatever their individual worthiness, the office they represent? We are not noted as a reverential people. Whose is the loss, those in authority from whom reverence is withheld, or the American people whose natures lack the refining influence of the reverential spirit? The loss of the power of admiration for a great man or a great office is most blighting in its effect. "I reverence the man with money," said a young man, "and no one else on this earth besides." What a commentary on his own character!

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell."

He who is not alive to the beautiful in nature, and he who has no reverent spirit for human nature alike loses a vast amount of enjoyment that rightfully should be his. "Respect takes nothing from our stature," says Mr. Charles Wagner. "Do you think that in bowing modestly to an old man as you pass him, or to a distinguished citizen, you have sacrificed a part of your dignity? On the contrary, in bowing to him you have added to your stature. In knowing what is honorable, you do yourself honor: failing in respect where it is due,

you do yourself dishonor. The lowest of human beings is he who has no respect for anything or anybody; he has descended so abjectly far that he has no longer even a sense of what is beautiful, noble, and exalted, or of what deserves admiration, enthusiasm, and reverence.

"A man's respect increases or decreases with his conception of his own dignity. The more a man is worth in his own eyes, the more willingly does he respect men or institutions which personify human nature and society. When he has lost faith in his higher self, in his worth as a moral being,—in his soul, in short,—he loses the basis of respect. Nothing appears worthy of reverence."

The Shame of Irreverence. Near the main entrance to Lincoln Park, Chicago, there is a large bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln. It represents him as just having risen from the chair of state. There are the deep eyes, so full of kindness, the patient brow, the careworn face; and the shoulders are somewhat bent, as if pressed down by the weight of a nation. One crisp, bright March morning a few years ago, when the air was full of frost, I saw a venerable man approach that statue. As he drew near he took off his hat and unmindful of the cold stood there, his white hair thrown to the wind, looking up into the great, sorrow-riven face. For several minutes he stood thus, uncovered, regarding the statue with the utmost reverence. It was a striking and beautiful picture—one I shall never forget. The venerable man was my old college president, and that attitude revealed his character. There was a depth in it that reached away to the heart of God.

But around that same statue I have seen the most frivolous and irreverent manifestations. There are coarse and vulgar pencilings there, and every once in a while some fellow of the baser sort flings a quid of tobacco against the silent and majestic form, or pollutes the pedestal and its surroundings with expectorations. What a contrast between such conduct and that of the refined and venerable college president! And in each case the conduct reveals the character! *Robert F. Coyle.*

The Reverence taught by Christ. Christ was full of deep reverence for God, as His Father, and the Father of all. He saw a divine goodness in all men and in all things. So He had respect, not only for the great men and the prophets, but for the poor, the low, the despised. He introduced into the world that new form of reverence, reverence for things below us; reverence for little children, for the ignorant, the poor, the suffering; yes, reverence for the soul of man even when most degraded by sin. This is the foundation of true democracy; the only basis for any real equality. Christianity makes human equality real, not by destroying the difference among men, but by teaching the good to seek and save the evil, the wise to instruct the ignorant, the rich to care for the poor, the strong to uphold the weak. This reverence for all men, because all are God's children, is the highest attainment of man. To look up and adore is easy; but to look down and respect what is below us is far more difficult. But this spirit Christ has imparted to the world.

"He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" says the Apostle. "He who reverences not the goodness he has seen, how can he reverence that which he has not seen?" He who despises man will despise God. Irreverence toward God often comes from disrespect toward men. *James Freeman Clarke, Self-Culture.*

III The End never justifies the Means

The Right Way, though Longer, is Safer. Though David was promised the kingdom, nay, just because he had faith in Him who made the promise, he would not make the body of Saul a step up to the throne. Contrast this conduct of his with that of Rebekah, when, thinking she could manage matters better than God, she stirred up Jacob to seek the birthright by deception, and you will see precisely what I mean when I hold up this procedure of David for approbation and imitation. Rebekah thought she was taking the shortest way to get at that which God had promised, but in reality she sent her son a long way round, entailed upon him much shame and misery, and deprived herself of his presence and fellowship for all her after life. David, in the view of his followers, might have stepped to the throne of Israel at once by murdering Saul, but he knew better than to take such a course as that. The right way may seem the longer, but it is always the safer; and when you get to your destination, you have the satisfaction of an approving conscience, and a favoring God.

"See," one says, "here is a glorious opportunity to make your fortune in one day. Never mind, though it does involve the ruin of a rival; you don't owe him any consideration. He would have no regard for you, if your circumstances were reversed," and so the temptation is to go and do as it is suggested. Or you may have the chance to step into a long coveted office at once, provided only you will covenant to do some mean, ungenerous, or dishonorable thing toward him who at the moment holds it. He has no love for you indeed, and would not hesitate to crush you if you were in his power; but what does that matter? If you yield to such a temptation, you are planting a seed which in after years will meet you in the shape of manifold retributions, while at the same time you are taking from success that which is ever its truest charm, namely, that it has been honorably and deservedly won. Never take a short road to any object when the gate into that road is sin. How much purer would our political and our commercial life become, if men would only consent to act upon that principle! Be not in such hot haste. Keep by the highway of the great King! That will lead you right, though it may sometimes seem to lead you round. Beware of turning to the one hand or the other, to follow some inviting footpath which seems to shorten the distance. Be sure that will land you in some dismal swamp, wherein you will flounder and struggle for a longer time than it would have taken you to go by the proper road, and when you get to your destination you will be all over mud! Let no vision of immediate success beguile you to do wrong. Do as God would have you; and leave it to Him to bring you to the goal you seek, in His own time. Make haste slowly, and rather resign yourself to the loss of your kingdom, than go to it through sin and shame. *W. G. Taylor, David King of Israel.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Mighty of heart, mighty of mind — magnanimous — to be this is indeed to be great in life. *Ruskin.*

The quality of mercy is not strained —
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed —
It blesses him that gives and him that takes. *Shakespeare.*

A man ruins his own possibilities who runs ahead of God's plans. *S. S. Times.*

Capacity for admiration is altogether admirable, as incapacity for admiration is altogether despicable. *Lyman Abbott.*

Irreverence comes from self-conceit and from a spirit of insubordination. *Bishop Vincent.*

It is better to live in a cottage and have Windsor to look up to, than to live in Windsor Castle and have nothing to look up to! *Ruskin.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

He whose spirit is without restraint
Is like a city that is broken down and without walls. Prov. 25. 28.

But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you. Luke 6. 27, 28.

Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God; for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom. 12. 19–21.

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Rom. 13. 1.

Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King. 1 Pet. 2. 17.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

These words of Sir Thomas Browne I will treasure in my heart: "Hath any wronged thee? Be bravely revenged. Slight it, and the work's begun; forgive it, 'tis finished. He is below himself that is not above an injury."

Not only will I forgive and forget an injury done me, but I will try to follow Christ's command to do good to them that hate me and to pray for them that despitefully use me.

Gœthe says that one should reverence those above him, his equals, and his inferiors. Is it far easier for me to see the worth of those above me than the worth that exists in the others? Have I a reverent spirit?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Learning through spies where Saul was encamped, David, accompanied only by Abishai, stealthily approached the camp, stole past all the sleeping warriors, and penetrated to the place where Saul lay behind the barricade of wagons. Abishai declared that God had given David's enemy into his hands, and besought David to allow him to kill Saul, but David would not permit this. "Who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless?" he asked: "Vengeance belonged to God, He would smite Saul, or cause him to fall in battle." Taking with them the king's spear, which according to custom was thrust into the ground at his head, and his cruse of water, the two stole away as quickly as they had come.

As day began to dawn there was consternation in the king's camp, and while

it was yet dark a voice was heard from the top of a far hill calling to Abner and taunting him for not having kept better watch over his king. "Now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head!" a voice exclaimed, and Saul recognized it as the voice of David. "Is this thy voice, my son David?" he called, and David answered, "It is my voice, my lord, O King." Then David appealed to Saul, asking him why he persisted in pursuing him. If Jehovah had instigated him to this enmity let Him be appeased by an offering, but if men had stirred Saul up against him let them be accursed; for they had driven him away from the land of Israel and in a foreign land he must serve other gods. "Let me not die a violent death in a heathen land," he urged, and added that it was unworthy of the king's dignity to hunt him, who was so insignificant and helpless.

Humbly Saul confessed that he had done wrong, and promised that he would not harm him. Perhaps he was sincerely repentant for the moment, his better nature being aroused by David's wondrous magnanimity in sparing his life, but David did not trust the feeling to be lasting. He bade the king send a young man for the spear, and reminded him, that, as he had spared the king's life, so the Lord would reward him and deliver him out of all tribulation. "Thou shalt surely prevail," the king said, and they parted never to meet again. Saul returned to Gibeah and David fled to the Philistines.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The difficulty of forgiving another whom you have injured.

2. Verses 19 and 20. The significance of Israel was never in what she shared with the Gentile world, but in her advance upon the morality about her. The presence of pagan survivals in the Old Testament enables us to estimate the ethical advance manifest in the truly great stories which it contains. *Theodore Gerald Soares.*

3. The two accounts of David's magnanimity toward Saul; 23. 14–24. 22, and the present lesson. "Perhaps in the whole Old Testament there is no more significant example of a double narrative," says Prof. Cornhill, "in all essential parts the same story, only in other words and with a somewhat different setting."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the account of Saul's death in 2 Samuel 1. 1–16. What had discouraged Saul in regard to the impending battle? (1 Sam. 28. 4–25.) 3. What one of the judges was taken prisoner by the Philistines and abused? (Samson.) 4. What cases of suicide are narrated in the Bible? Ahitophel, 2 Sam. 17. 23; Zimri, 1 Kings 16. 18; Judas Iscariot, Matt. 27. 5. 5. What reasons are given for Saul's death in 1 Chron. 10. 13, 14? 6. With the placing of Saul's armor in the heathen temple compare the placing of Goliath's sword in the tabernacle. (1 Sam. 21. 9). 7. What was done with the head of Goliath? (1 Sam. 17. 54–57.) 8. Where did the bones of Saul and his sons finally find a resting-place? (2 Sam. 21. 12–14.) 9. For what were the men of Jabesh-gilead grateful to Saul? (1 Sam. 1–11.) 10. How long did Joseph fast, when mourning for his father Jacob? (Gen. 50. 10.) 11. Where was David at the time of the battle? (2 Sam. 1.) 12. Read 2 Sam. 1. 17–27.

LESSON X — SEPTEMBER 6

SAUL AND JONATHAN SLAIN IN BATTLE

I Sam. 31. (Read I Sam. 27–11; II Sam. 1.) Commit v. 6.

Golden Text

Prepare to meet thy God. Amos. 4. 12.

LESSON TEXT I Sam. 31. 1–13.

1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.
2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons.
3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.
4 Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.
5 And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.
6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.
7 And when the men of Israel that *were* on the other side of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.
8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.
9 And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish *it in* the house of their idols, and among the people.
10 And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.
11 And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul,
12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.
13 And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. The account of Saul's death given in 1 Chron. 10. 1–12 is the same as the one in this chapter. Compare the somewhat different account in 2 Sam. 1. 1–10. *Slain.* R. V., margin, *wounded.*

2. *Abinadab.* R. V., margin, in 14. 49, *Ishoi. Saul's sons.* R. V., *the sons of Saul.*

3. *The archers . . . archers.* R. V., *the archers overtook him; and he was greatly disturbed by reason of the archers.*

4. *These uncircumcised.* The Philistines. *Come and thrust me through and abuse me.* In 1 Chron. 10. 4 the first clause is omitted, making Saul's fear refer,

not to the abuse of his body after death (which would not be prevented by his being killed by his armor-bearer), but to his being tortured while yet alive by his enemies. Compare the treatment of Samson. See also Judges 9. 54.

5. *His armourbearer saw that Saul was dead.* Compare the account of Saul's death in 11 Sam. 1. 10. Saul might have been supporting himself by his spear, but seemingly thrust through by it, as his armor-bearer thought. *He likewise fell upon his sword.* Perhaps he feared being put to death because he had not prevented his King's death.

6. *All his men. All his house* (1 Chron. 10. 6).

7. *The other side of the valley.* The valley or plain of Jezreel is meant. The other side would be the north side. *On the other side Jordan.* R. V., *beyond the Jordan.* "This clause is wanting in Chronicles, and should be dropped here, as it is extremely improbable that the Philistines occupied (see end of verse) any part of the trans-Jordanic territory." *Kennedy.*

9. *To publish it in the house of their idols.* R. V., *To carry the tidings into*

Torture of Assyrian Prisoners

the house of their idols, and to the people. The Philistines believed they owed the victory to their idols, and the good news must be brought to their temples.

10. *The house of Ashtaroth.* R. V., *the house of the Ashtaroth.* "Rather, 'the temple of Astarti," probably at Ashkelon." *Kennedy. Fastened his body to the wall.* "Probably above the principal gate, opening on the market-place, outside the walls."

11. *The inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead.* See 1 Sam. 11. 1–11 for the reason of their gratitude to Saul. *Heard of that.* R. V., *heard concerning him that.*

12. *And burnt them there.* "This is inconsistent with Hebrew usage, according to which only the bodies of culprits were burned (Lev. 20. 14; 21. 9; Josh. 7. 25), and the statement in the next verse that *they buried their bones.* The clause is also not found in 1 Chron. 10. 12. The mistake probably resulted from an error in the reading of a very similar Hebrew word, *to lament for the dead.*" *Kent.*

13. *Buried them.* Later David had them removed to the sepulchre of Kish at Zelah. See 2 Sam. 21. 14. *Under a tree at Jabesh.* R. V., *under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh. Fasted seven days.* See Gen. 50. 10; 2 Sam. 1. 12.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

6. *So Saul died.* Saul was a simple-minded, impulsive, courageous warrior;

he was a loyal patriot who loved his people and was ready to give his life for them; his physical preëminence, combined with energy and enthusiasm, fitted him to lead a sudden attack and to awaken loyal support, while his intrepid courage kindled the same in others. But Saul was a son of that rude age whose roots were found in the time of the Judges. In a sense he was a child grown big. The position which he occupied demanded executive ability, tact, the power of organization, and, above all, patience and persistence. In these maturer qualities he was deficient; they are rarely the possession of fiery, impulsive natures. In addition, Saul was unable to understand and to appreciate the higher, more exalted religious experiences and ideals which were already becoming the possession of the more enlightened souls of seers like Samuel.

When he fell at Gilboa, and the Philistines again became masters of northern and central Canaan, Saul's work seemed to be completely undone; but its foundations were laid too deeply to be undermined by political changes. Saul found the Hebrews ground down under Philistine dominance, broken in spirit, undisciplined, and little more than cowards. He united and aroused them to strike for independence. In the same training-school of Philistine warfare, he developed out of the cowards who had fled before the Philistine army to hide themselves in caves and cisterns the hardy, brave warriors with whom David made his conquests. David reaped the fruits of Saul's sowing, but the harvest would never have been so glorious without the pioneer's toils. *Charles Foster Kent, History of Hebrew People.*

6. *So Saul died.* Saul's achievements, and possibly his character, have suffered at the hands of the writer of 1 Samuel, whose interest centered chiefly in David. Of his public career little is really known; for with the exception of the campaigns with which his reign opened and closed, the record is mainly concerned with his unhappy animosity toward David. It is clear that he must have re-united to the rest of Israel the tribe of Judah, which, all through the time of the Judges, had been more or less severed from its fellow-tribes: for not only did his rule embrace Bethlehem, the home of David, but the campaign against the Amalekites (14. 48) was manifestly intended to protect the southern frontier of Judah. East of Jordan, his early attack upon Nahash the Ammonite was followed by a war with Moab; and his authority was so firmly secured over Gilead that Mahanaim became the refuge and capital of his son Eshbaal (2 Sam. 2. 8). He even pushed his arms as far north as the territory of Zobah.

The vindictiveness which he displayed in later life, which was perhaps not wholly unnatural under any circumstances, was probably in part the result of mental disease. Yet it must be confessed that Saul was himself largely responsible for the ruin of his career. He failed to make the most of his opportunities. Stubborn of disposition, narrow in his sympathies, and lacking a statesmanlike grasp of the situation, he refused to the prophet the submission which the latter, as the representative of Jehovah, demanded; and so threw away what should have been his greatest source of confidence and therefore of strength. The tide that is in the affairs of men Saul took at the flood, and it bore him on to fortune; but eventually, in place of guiding his bark dexterously along the stream, he obstinately set it athwart the current, and so made shipwreck. His rival and successor pursued a very different course, and reached, in consequence, a very different result. *G. W. Wade, O. T. History.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *Saul took his sword, and fell upon it.* A thousand years after Saul's day, a thousand Hebrews, by unanimous consent, slew one another in Masada to save themselves from falling alive into the hands of the Romans; and it is still the case that men prefer to die rather than be taken prisoners by a non-Christian enemy. *Sunday School Times.*

9. *They cut off his head, and stripped off his armor.* It was the oriental practice to strip and even to mutilate the bodies of enemies left dead on the battle-field. Beheading was a common practice. At Nineveh Layard found numerous representations of warriors bearing away the heads of their victims as trophies, or presenting them to their kings.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From their cities near the coast the Philistine warriors met and marched northward along the Maritime Plain and then eastward through the Plain of Esdraelon. On these plains their horses and chariots could move freely. By the town of Shunem, on the southern slope of the Hill of Moreh (the Little Hermon of New Testament times) they pitched their camp. The Israelites had kept to the hills of Judah, and they finally encamped at the foot of Mt. Gilboa, south of the Plain. It was near the spot where Gideon's camp had been, before his attack on the Midianites, by the spring of Harod, or "trembling" a name given to it because of the "fear and trembling" of Gideon's men. Saul was utterly discouraged, and perhaps his warriors, too, were "trembling," for there may have been whispered about among them the news of the King's midnight journey around the Philistine camp to the witch at Endor, on the northern slope of the Hill of Moreh, and of the prophecy of defeat there made. On the morrow the Philistines made their charge, drove the Israelites up the heights of Gilboa, and utterly routed them. "On the high places of Gilboa the pride of Israel was slain," the high places where the Israelites were usually victorious.

Bethshan, on whose town walls the bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened, was a Philistine city three miles west of the Jordan. It commanded the Jordan Valley southward and the Valley of Zezreel westward (the name given to the eastern end of the Plain of Esdraelon), between Gilboa and the Hill of Moreh. Jabesh-gilead was in Gilead across the Jordan. The assumed site, on an isolated, round-topped hill, is in full view of Bethshan, about ten miles away.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Realizing that after his revulsion of feeling certain to come, Saul would be more hostile than ever because of his confession and of his own (David's) magnanimous treatment, David as a last resource fled with his household and six hundred valiant men to his country's long-time enemies, the Philistines. Achish, King of Gath, welcomed him and gave him the town of Ziklag, on the edge of the desert south of Beersheba. He made raids upon the Amalekites and other desert tribes farther south, and brought the spoil to Achish as proof of his loyalty to his new master and hostility to his kinsmen, for he pre-

tended to Achish that his raids had been made in certain districts belonging to his own tribe and its allies. From day to day valiant Israelites came to him at Ziklag, so we are told in first Chronicles, until there was a great host with him.

When the Philistines determined to make a concerted attack on the Israelites, so great was the confidence of Achish in David that he ordered him and his men to accompany him and join in the attack. David obeyed and started with Achish. We wonder what course would have been his when he reached the scene of battle, but fortunately the difficulty was solved for him by the other Philistine princes, who doubted his loyalty to their cause and compelled Achish to send him and his men back. On reaching Ziklag again it was found that the Amalekites had taken advantage of their absence and burned the town, carrying off the women and children and spoil. David pursued them. An Egyptian slave of the Philistines aided him in finding them in the desert; his attack was wholly successful; he rescued the women and children and returned with rich spoil, a portion of which he sent as gifts to the elders of Judah and their allies.

Meanwhile the Philistine and Israelite hosts were arrayed for battle. The night before the last battle, Saul, feeling himself deserted by the Lord, visited the Witch of Endor, "who had a familiar spirit," and besought her to summon Samuel from the dead. She claimed to do this, and Saul believed that the voice he heard was that of the prophet. The voice said that the Lord had departed from Saul, that the battle on the morrow would go against him, and he and his sons would perish. Utterly disheartened, the king returned to await a hopeless conflict.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. See the Geographical and the Historical Background.

For Older Pupils. It is said that when one of Dickens' works was being printed as a serial in London, a reader became so interested in the hero that when he read of his death, he exclaimed of Dickens, "Ye spalpeen, ye hadn't sense enough to keep him alive!" It is with almost the same sense of keen disappointment, no matter how often we read this history, that we come to the account of the death of Jonathan, that Old Testament character with so many New Testament virtues. Saul's persistent persecution of David naturally makes us blind to his real services to his country; his sad death moves our pity, but does not arouse our active interest, while Jonathan's seemingly untimely end arouses almost a feeling of rebellion. We would like to see David king and Jonathan second unto him. Jonathan's gentler virtues shine with so glorious a light that it seems almost strange that he should die on the battle-field; we need to turn back again to the 14th chapter and read about his daring exploit at Michmash when he made it possible for the Israelites to win their victory over the Philistines, to realize that he was an undoubted warrior, jealous for the welfare of his country, willing and ready to die in her service.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Prepare to meet thy God

When to prepare. In a New Jersey town there were fire extinguishers

in a large building which failed to work when the building caught on fire. At a town meeting the situation was discussed, and finally a man arose and gravely said, "Mr. Chairman, I move that the fire extinguishers be examined ten days before every fire." Because death, like fire, can not be prepared for ten days beforehand, our lesson committee has chosen as the Golden Text for to-day these words from Amos, Prepare to meet thy God. Saul and his three sons have fallen on the field of battle. Were they prepared to meet their God? Such a question as this at once recalls Christ's words to Peter, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." The fate of this one or that one we can not judge; each one's fate alone is in His power to determine.

You remember Christ's parable of the Wise and the Foolish Virgins, with its lesson, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." Since we can not know when our summons will come, we can not put off the preparation for its coming until a "convenient season."

An English nobleman lived a reckless, evil life. Now and then his conscience troubled him slightly, but he always quieted it by saying, "There is no hell. Many wise people do not believe the Bible; I will not believe it." When he lay on his death-bed, however, violent remorse and a terrible fear of meeting God seized him. "Can you prove to me that there is no hell?" he asked again and again. "I will give thirty thousand pounds to any one who will prove to me there is none." There was nobody who could prove this, and he died in an agony of despair. There is a future life. There is an abode of the righteous and an abode of the wicked. In His parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Christ represents Abraham as saying, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from hence to us." Our life everlasting is determined by our present life. The character we are forming here is for eternity. What shall it be?

The famous Cardinal Mazarin of France cried out in the last hour of his life: "O my poor soul, what will become of you? Where are you going?" John Huss as he was being burned alive at the stake looked up to Heaven and cried: "Into Thy hands, Lord Jesus, I give my soul redeemed by Thee."

Be Disciples of To-day. This is the best use of life. To make each day a full, well-balanced, perfect portion of time, and not to extend energies on too wide a sweep of perspective or retrospection. Begin each day with a thought of God, of your obligation and of His grace. Then devote your whole soul to His service in the helping of your fellow-men. Each day furnishes ample opportunity for the use of all one's power for that day provided.

Everything calls your attention to to-day. When turn over a new leaf in life? To-day! When put forth my hand to grasp the outstretched right hand of God? To-day! When break with my selfish and unworthy past? To-day! Is one not to think of yesterday? Yes; but for the sake of to-day! Is one not to hope for to-morrow? Yes; but for the enrichment of to-day!

To-day is the fruit of yesterday, and in it are the seeds of to-morrow. Therefore live to-day! Fill it with worthy ideals, resolves, enthusiasms, endeavors, and conquests. Make it as far as possible a perfect day, a golden day, a day of power, a day of beauty. And on some blessed morning, when flesh and heart fail, and the gate is ajar, as you ask concerning your Lord: When shall I see Him? and my friends who are with Him; when shall I see them? From celestial voices will you not hear in blessed chorus this happy, exultant re-

sponse: To-day! to-day! to-day! *Bishop John H. Vincent,* in *Epworth Herald.*

II Showing Gratitude

The Men of Jabesh-gilead. The first public act of Saul the king was his prompt rescue of the men of Jabesh-gilead. You remember that Nahash the Ammonite had besieged the town of Jabesh in Gilead, and his terms of capitulation were that the right eyes of all the people should be put out. They asked for seven days' respite, and when the news of their plight reached Saul he summoned a great host of warriors by cutting up his yoke of oxen, and sending the pieces throughout the country with the grim information that whoever failed to come "after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." With an army quickly raised he vanquished the Ammonites and rescued the people of Jabesh. Now in the account of Saul's sad death, the only bright gleam is the gratitude shown by the inhabitants of Jabesh. They had not forgotten their debt to Saul, and when they learned that the Philistines had fastened his body and those of his three sons to the wall of Bethshan they started at once to rescue them from disgrace. To venture into the enemy's city at this time was a very brave thing to do, and to bring the bodies back to Jabesh and bury them was an act of great respect to the dead and, in the eyes of the Israelites, an act of very great kindness, for to have one's body left unburied was considered one of the greatest calamities that could befall one.

Gratitude should be expressed. A neighbor found his recreation during the hot summer in refurnishing his home to delight his loved ones on their return from vacation. The parlor gleamed with new pictures, and every chamber had its souvenir of thoughtfulness. "It paid to see their enjoyment," he said; "but one thing broke me all up. My little Dot climbed into my lap and kissed me and said, 'Papa, you was weal good, wasn't you?' She was the only one that had said so. Bless her heart!"

The least thing you and I can do to show that we are thankful is to say so. *James L. Ludlow.*

III Enduring Trouble

No Right to leave the Field of Battle. When hopes are shattered, friends are lost, and this physical frame is bruised and jarred by some dreadful violence of pain — then what do we think of life? Then, how do men act in respect of life? There are two ways common to men: either to repudiate life or to endure it. The shallow and the selfish man repudiates life. He says, "There's nothing to live for; why should I live? My hopes have gone, my friends, my joys; why should I lag superfluous on the stage?" This was the way in which the Roman of the Empire reasoned, and so it came to be almost an axiom of right and dignified conduct that when the troubles of life became too much for a man, he was at liberty to pass out of life by his own hand. But you will notice that the earlier and more strenuous Roman of the Republic never reasoned thus. It is only in the decadence of nations that suicide becomes common. In the Old Testament, you have picture after picture of the tragic accumulation of sorrow that befalls a human life, but with the solitary exception of Saul there is hardly a case of a man dying by his own hand. Jacob complains that all things have gone against him; Job fills our hearts with

the wail of his bitter lamentations; but neither thinks of quitting the stage of his sorrows till his appointed time is come. If suicide is not specifically forbidden in the Old Testament, it is because it is never contemplated as possible.

Christ teaches us that the right attitude of mind toward life is not repudiation of life, but endurance. The truly brave and wise man says, Let me know and bear all that life may bring; let me escape nothing of the burden that a wiser Will may impose upon me; let me drink to the dregs, alike in its sweetness or its bitterness, the cup that may be mixed for me! And this was precisely the attitude of Jesus. He prays that if it be possible the cup might pass from Him — most natural, most human of prayers — but if the cup may not pass, He will drink it. The Lord has sent good; shall He not send evil? He will shirk nothing of the full tension of extreme pain that may be appointed Him. The cup that My Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? is His sublime reply to His too eager disciple who would have rescued Him from His enemies by the sword. And then Jesus endured the cross, not only for what it means in human redemption, but because He recognized it as a necessary element of His life.

When the dark hour comes upon us, the intolerable hour, the forlorn and unfriended hour, when life seems wholly unendurable — what are we to do? The answer of Christ is, Endure; the answer of the Apostle is, Look unto Jesus who endured. You have no right to leave the field of battle until the great Captain sounds the recall. You must nourish in yourself the instinct of life, and then you will endure. Hard and dark as things may seem, the gate opening into light may be closer than you know — wait a moment longer, there is yet joy set before you. In nothing is Jesus more our example than in this, that in nothing did He flinch or turn back from His appointed way. He went straight onward. *W. J. Dawson, The Reproach of Christ.*

The Lessons from Trouble. "When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold," said Job after his possessions had been taken from him. This disposition to learn the lesson that may be learned from adversity, is one of the great differences between strength and weakness of character. Job is the strong character tested by trouble and proved to be pure gold; Saul is the weak character tested by trouble and proved to be but brass. What we call discouragements, obstacles, adversity, may be after all, if we will but let it be so, God's opportunities for teaching us how to be strong through struggle, patient through endurance, brave through suffering, wise and sweet-spirited and noble through experiences rightly borne.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Live in the present that you may be ready for the future. *Charles Kingsley.*

Remember that what you possess in the world will be found at the day of your death to belong to some one else; but what you are, will be yours forever. *Henry van Dyke.*

By and By

What will it matter? Naught if I
Only am sure the way I've trod,
Gloomy or gladdened, leads to God. *Mrs. Preston.*

The man who forgets to be thankful has fallen asleep in life. *Stevenson.*

Not when things look bright, but when all is gone except God and self, is

the time to endure and be brave, and to evidence true manhood; never to give up, but ever to keep up, to keep at it, is the duty and the test of heroism in times that are hard and in hours that are dark. *H. Clay Trumbull.*

I ask not that for me the plan
Of good or ill be set aside,
But that the common lot of man
Be nobly borne and glorified. *Phœbe Cary.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

So Satan went forth from the presence of Jehovah, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his feet unto his crown. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Renounce God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Job 1. 7, 9, 10.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth:
Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. Job 5. 17.
Let me die the death of the righteous. Num. 23. 10.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Saul failed to make the best of his opportunities; his reign started out brilliantly, but it ended ingloriously. What are my opportunities in life? Am I wasting them because I wish they were greater or different? Then I, too, am in danger of making shipwreck of a life intended for the service of others.

Are there hard places in our lives, trials greater than we think we can bear, times when we wish this life were over?

Well to suffer is divine;
Pass the watchword down the line,
Pass the countersign, "Endure!"
Not to him who rashly dares,
But to him who nobly bears,
Is the victor's garland sure.

These are Whittier's comforting words. We can not change the troubles that come to us, but we can diminish the power that we permit them to have over us, and we can make them help our spiritual growth.

He who is faithful in that which is least is faithful in that which is greatest. He who strives to live a life of daily obedience to the will of God is prepared to meet Him when His summons comes.

THE LESSON STORY

The Philistines crossed the plain and attacked the Israelites, forcing them to flee up the slope of Mount Gilboa. Brave, noble-hearted Jonathan and his two brothers were among the multitude slain. Seeing himself the mark at which the Philistine archers were aiming their arrows, Saul's soul revolted at the horrible thought of falling wounded into their hands, and he besought his armor-bearer to thrust him through with his sword. The armor-bearer refused his wish; when he saw Saul fall upon his own sword, he did the same, and perished with his king. Combining with this account that of the next chapter in 2

Samuel, we suppose that Saul was leaning heavily on his sword, seemingly dead to the eyes of the terrified armor-bearer, when an Amalekite, in search of spoil, came up and had no scruples in carrying out Saul's expressed wish.

Darkness fell on the battle-field. On the morrow the Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his three sons. Exultantly they cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor, and carried the bodies of the king and the princes to Bethshan and fastened them upon the walls. Saul's armor was finally deposited in their heathen temple, after it had been sent with Saul's head around to the Philistine cities to proclaim the news of his death, of the defeat of the Israelites, and also of the latter's flight from the near-by cities.

When the men of Jabesh-gilead heard what had been done to the bodies of Saul and his sons, they showed their devotion by crossing the Jordan at night and rescuing them from the walls of Bethshan. Returning to Jabesh, they buried them under a conspicuous tamarisk tree with all fitting honor, fasting seven days according to strict custom.

"How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The three accounts of the death of Saul, the present lesson, 2 Sam. 1. 5-16, and 1 Chron. 10. 1–13; also 2 Sam. 4. 10.

2. Saul's visit to the witch of Endor. "It is a remarkable fact that no men are so credulous toward the superstitions of witchcraft, spiritualism, and atheism, as the men who are most incredulous regarding the existence, authority, and providence of God."

3. To die in order to avoid the pains of poverty, or anything else that is disagreeable, is not the part of a brave man, but of a coward; for it is cowardice to shun the trials of life. *Aristotle.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. The lesson records the second and third anointing of David as King. When had he been anointed by Samuel? Lesson 5 of this quarter. 2. When before in the account of David's life is there a series of questions given that shows, like those in 2. 1, how he sought to know God's will? (1 Sam. 23. 2–4, 9–12; 30. 7–8.) 3. To whom had the city of Hebron been given in the days of the Judges? (Josh. 14. 3.) As a reward for what? (Josh. 14. 6–12.) 4. For whom is Hebron now called El-Kahil, the Friend? (An abbreviation of *the Friend of God.* See Gen. 13. 18.) 5. Who was buried at Hebron in the cave of Machpelah? (Gen. 23. 19; 25. 9; 35. 27, 29; 50. 13.) 6. With 5. 1–3 compare Deut. 17. 15 and 1 Sam. 3. 18. 7. In what lesson was David said to be the leader of the military forces, to which verse 5. 2 refers? (August 16.) 8. Read 1 Chron. 11. 1–3; 12. 23–40. What is said about the rejoicing when David was made King of all Israel? 9. Read the 101st Psalm, called the Inauguration Psalm, and conjectured to have been composed in connection with David's anointing at Hebron. According to this Psalm, what were David's standards of conduct and government?

LESSON XI — SEPTEMBER 13

DAVID MADE KING OVER JUDAH AND ISRAEL

II Sam. 2. 1–7; 5. 1–5. (Read II Sam. 2–5.) Commit II Sam. 5. 4–5.

Golden Text

David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of Hosts was with him. II Sam. 5. 10.

LESSON TEXT II Sam. 2. 1–7; 5. 1–5.

1 And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.
2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.
3 And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.
4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead *were they* that buried Saul.
5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.
6 And now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.
7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.
1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.
2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.
3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel.
4 David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years.
5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *After this.* After the news of Saul's death. *Enquired of the Lord.* R. V., *inquired of Jehovah.* He probably made his inquiries of the oracle of the Ephod through Abiathar, the high priest. We do not know how the questions and answers were given. "A succession of questions was apparently put to the oracle, each of which admitted of being answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no' according to the lot, Urim or Thummim, which was cast." *Kennedy. Unto Hebron.* "Probably the name was obtained by a process of exclusion like that used in discovering a person by lot."

2. *Went up.* From Ziklag. *Jezreelitess.* Of the city of Jezreel. Nabal's

wife. R. V., *the wife of Nabal.* Nabal was dead. See 2 Sam. 25. 39–44.

3. *His men with him.* See 1 Chron. 12. 19–22. *The cities of Hebron.* The neighboring dependent towns.

4. *The men of Judah.* David's own tribesmen. *Anointed David king over the house of Judah.* Compare 1 Sam. 16. 13. *Saying, That.* R. V., *saying.* In order to explain why this remark was made at this time, it has been suggested that the men of Judah also told David that these men would regard him as Saul's enemy and would be hostile to him.

6. *Kindness.* R. V., *loving kindness.* Loving kindness and truth are often used together in referring to God's government of His people. See Exodus 34. 6.

7. *Therefore now let your hands be strengthened.* R. V., *Now therefore let your hands be strong. Your master Saul.* R. V., *Saul your lord. The house of Judah have anointed me King over them.* David's message is plain. Their duty to Saul's house has ended with Saul's death; he asks them to recognize him as Saul's successor. That he was not successful in his purpose is told in verses 8–10. 5. 1. *Then.* After the murder of Ish-bosheth, their king (4. 5–12). *All the tribes of Israel.* The elders or representatives (verse 3) of the Northern Tribes, of all Israel exclusive of the tribe of Judah. *Thy bone and thy flesh.* See 19. 12. They were brethren, being all descendants of Jacob.

2. *Also in time past.* R. V., *In times past. Thou wast he.* R. V., *It was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.* David had been the leader of their military forces. See 2 Sam. 17. 5, 13–16. *Thou shalt feed.* R. V., *Thou shalt be shepherd of.* The first use of this figure of the king as a shepherd, expressing his care for his people, afterwards so common. See 7. 7 and also Gen. 49. 24. *A captain.* R. V., *prince.* R. V., margin, *leader.*

3. *A league.* R. V., *a covenant.* In the lesson for July 12th we read that "Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book." This covenant between David and the people doubtless specified rules by which each should be governed.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. *David inquired of Jehovah.* He will do nothing in this crisis of his fortunes, when all which had been so long a hope seemed to be rapidly becoming a fact, until his Shepherd shall lead him. Rapid and impetuous as he was by nature, schooled to swift decisions, followed by still swifter action, knowing that a blow struck at once, while all was chaos and despair at home, might set him on the throne, he holds nature and policy and the impatience of his people in check to hear what God will say. So fully did he fulfill the vow of his early psalm. "My strength! upon thee will I wait!" (59. 9.) *Alexander Maclaren.*

2. *David inquired of Jehovah.* There was an image the form of which is still unascertained, called an Ephod. The verb from which the noun is derived means to cover, or overlay: and we can thus infer that the Ephod image was overlaid with a coating of some precious metal. We hear of these Ephods several times. Gideon sets one up out of the spoils of his victory in the sanctuary at Ophrah. Micah the Ephraimite possesses one in his own private chapel. There is another Ephod in the sanctuary at Nob, which Abiathar takes with him in his flight as a valuable piece of priestly property. (Judges 8. 27;

17. 5; 1 Sam. 21. 9; 23. 6, 9.) From the use subsequently made by David of this Ephod, we learn that the image was used in throwing the sacred lot. *C. G. Montefiore, The Religion of the Ancient Hebrews.*

3. *David made a covenant with them before Jehovah.* One of the psalms (101) ascribed to David sounds like the resolves of a new monarch on his accession. In it the Psalmist draws the ideal of a king, and says such things as, "I will behave myself wisely, in a perfect way. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. I hate the work of them that turn aside. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me." That psalm we may regard as the first words of the king, when, after long, weary years, the promise of Samuel's anointing was fulfilled, and he sat on the throne. *Maclaren.*

5. *David king over all Israel and Judah.* It is worth while to notice the striking parallel presented by early English history to the course of events which brought about the union of the tribes under a single sceptre. The invasion of Britain by the English in the fifth and sixth centuries led to the establishment of a number of small, independent kingdoms which were continually weakened by mutual jealousy and strife. Indeed, the warfare between the Britons and the invaders gradually died down into a warfare of English kingdoms against each other. Then came the invasion of the Northmen. The victorious Danes, like the Philistines of Old Testament History, settled down in the midst of the conquered population, which under their dominion was gradually welded into a vigorous nation. The need of resistance to a common foe forced the English to recognize a common king, and towards the close of the ninth century, Ælfred, from being the mere chieftain of the West Saxons, became the king and champion of the united English people in its struggle with the stranger. *R. L. Ottley, History of the Hebrews.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *Ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.* To be left unburied was to the Israelites as to all ancient people a most dreadful thought, the greatest of disgraces. Compare the number of times in which Jeremiah proclaims as great punishment that bodies will be left unburied. (Jer. 7. 33; 8. 12; 16. 4; 22. 19; 36. 30.)

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Ziklag, the town south of Beersheba given to him by the king of Gath, David "went up" to Hebron, where he established his capital as king of Judah. Hebron is fifteen miles south of Bethlehem, and is 3,000 feet above sea level. It was the chief city of the tribe of Judah, and is one of the oldest towns in the world, famous in Bible history as the home of Abraham, and the place where Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob were buried. It was assigned to Caleb as a reward for his faithfulness, and it was one of the cities of refuge. Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, had his capital meanwhile, as king of the other tribes of Israel, at Manhanaim, east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok.

David's first act after his being proclaimed king over all Israel and Judah, was to conquer the stronghold of Jebus, and make it his capital. Jebus was a most wise choice. It was situated on the border of the tribe of Benjamin, half-way between Hebron, the capital of Judah, and Shechem, the capital of

Ephraim; it commanded the highway north and south; on three sides it was almost impregnable by nature because of their precipitousness, and it was further strengthened by a wall. It had never been in the control of the Israelites and therefore could arouse no sectional jealousy. Jebus was henceforth known as Mt. Zion or Jerusalem, the city of David. "Beautiful for situation is Mt. Zion, the city of the great king, the joy of the whole earth! Peace be within thy wall and prosperity within thy palaces," says the Song of Degrees.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Two days after his return to Ziklag from his pursuit of the marauders, news of the battle of Gilboa reached David through an Amalekite who had been on the battle-field. He brought David Saul's crown and bracelets, told him that he found the king leaning on his spear and at the king's entreaty killed him. Instead of the expected reward, he received death at David's hands for having killed the Lord's anointed. In memory of Saul and Jonathan, David composed a song of lamentation which afterwards became known as the "Song of the Bow," for the record says that David "bade them teach the children of Judah the song of the bow." Forgetful of his personal wrongs, David eulogized the king and his son, in beautiful words which bear the ring of sincerest sorrow and affection.

His lament was also politic, for it showed him to the Israelites, not as the enemy but as a member of the house of Saul, and it must have won for him the loyalty of many friends of the royal house. He made no effort to seize the kingdom by force, but was content to wait, as he long had waited, till it should rightfully fall to him.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you remember how, in our lessons last year, we saw Joseph taken out of prison and made a ruler of the Egyptians, second only to the Pharaoh or King, and Moses, the son of parents who were slaves, taken out of the bulrushes and brought up at the royal court as a prince, the son of Pharaoh's daughter? What wonderful changes were those! To-day, David, the shepherd lad, becomes David the great king of Israel.

For Older Pupils. David was, in effect, the first king of Israel, the first ancestor of a royal line, the first one to rule over what might be called an empire. Saul had been a tribal chief, in some respects not very different from the Judges who preceded him. David was a king in reality as well as in name. His prowess extended the tribal holdings into an empire with which the other empires had to reckon, and so brilliant was his reign that it became the ideal of after ages. Solomon built the temple, but David chose the royal city, made Jerusalem the center of the religious as well as the national life by the temple for which he planned, and the royal palace which he built.

It is difficult to realize the great antiquity of David's rule. It was between

two and three centuries before Rome had its traditional beginning in a few shepherds' huts upon its hills, and European history was undreamed of.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Waiting

In God's Own Time. When David had Saul's life in his hands at Ziph, and Abishai wished to "spear him to the earth with one stroke," David would not consent to Saul's death, but said to Abishai: "As Jehovah liveth; Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle and perish. Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hands against Jehovah's anointed." David would not gain his throne by any short cut which he knew to be the wrong road. After long years of waiting, Saul did go down into battle and perish, and now at last David's opportunity has come. Crowned king of Judah by his own tribe; renowned for his skill in warfare, undisturbed by the Philistines who seem to have still regarded him as their vassal, what prevented his rushing to arms and making himself king of all Israel? But he had waited long since he had been anointed by Samuel as the Lord's king elect, and he could wait yet longer till the right time came. He made friendly overtures to the men of Jabesh-gilead, which were not accepted. Well, he could await God's own time, for he had learned self-restraint and patience in his life's hard school. Some one has said that to know how to wait restfully is as high an attainment as to know how to wrestle manfully. David knew how to do both.

David could wait God's Time. A child had been playing in the garden. The mother said, "What have you been doing, my child?" "Helping God, Mother," was the quick reply. "And how have you been helping God?" "I saw a flower going to blossom and I blossomed it." That is a parable of much that we are doing to-day. We may get our blossom, but we may spoil the fruit. We are little men, and we are in a hurry. God is great, and He is in no hurry. If we are to work with the Eternal, we must needs learn patience. *A. W. Robinson.*

Impatience. When the poet Alfred de Musset, was a very small lad he was made happy by a pair of bright red shoes. He was prepared for a walk with his nurse, and he became very impatient because she, too, was not ready to start at once. Loudly he called to her: "Hurry! hurry! I want to start. My shoes will be too old!" Do you know any one like that little boy?

A Rare Virtue. People are always talking of perseverance, and courage, and fortitude; but patience is the finest and worthiest part of fortitude — and the rarest, too. I know twenty persevering girls for one patient one; but it is only that twenty-first who can do her work, out and out, and enjoy it. For patience lies at the root of all pleasure, as well as of all powers. Hope herself ceases to be happiness, when Impatience companions her. *Ruskin, Ethics of the Dust.*

II Good Citizenship

David's Message. David's message to the citizens of Jabesh-gilead is a most interesting one. He thanked them for their devotion to Saul in rescuing his body from disgrace, told them God would reward them, and promised them that he also would requite their kindness to Saul. In this he showed both a magnanimous spirit toward Saul's, his persecutor's, memory, and also a diplo-

matic spirit towards the Jabeshites, those men of the northern kingdom who with their natural jealousy of the tribe of Judah might regard him as the enemy of the house of Saul. "Now, therefore, let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant," he further said: "therefore," because "Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them." In this natural crisis he reminds them of their duties as citizens. Saul is dead, who shall be their ruler? He would willingly be their king as well as the king of the tribe of Judah, he plainly tells them, but he has no intention of accomplishing this object by force, it is for them to decide. "Let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant" in this dark hour when your enemies, the Philistines, have made themselves masters of Central Canaan. Upon you the responsibility rests.

Of course you have often heard the expression "You are a brick;" do you know how it came into use? "Every man a brick" is a very old phrase. Plutarch tells us that an ambassador from Epirus was being shown by the king of Sparta over his capital and was much surprised to find no massive walls encircling the city. "Sire," he said, "I find no walls reared for the defense of your capital. How is this?" "Sir Ambassador, thou canst not have looked carefully," replied the king. "Come with me to-morrow morning, and I will show you the walls of Sparta." The next morning the king led the ambassador out upon the plain where his army was drawn up in full battle array, and, pointing proudly to the men, he said: "There thou beholdest the walls of Sparta — ten thousand men, and every man a brick!" David asked the men of Jabesh to let their hands be strong and to be valiant, to prove themselves "the bricks" of the Israelite kingdom.

The Qualities of Good Citizens. I plead with you for all that makes strong citizens. First, clear convictions, deep, careful, patient study of the government under which we live, until you not merely believe it to be the best in all the world, but know why you believe. And then a clear conscience, as clear as in private interests, as much ashamed of public as of private sin, as ready to hate, rebuke, and vote down corruption in the State, in your own party, as you would be in your own store or church; as ready to bring the one as the other to the judgment of a living God. And then unselfishness — an earnest and exalted sense that you are for the land, and not alone the land for you. And then activity — the readiness to wake and watch and do a citizen's work untiringly, counting it as base not to vote at an election, not to work against a bad official or not to work for a good one, as it would have been to shirk a battle in war. Such strong citizenship let there be among us, such knightly doing of our duties on the field of peace. *Phillips Brooks.*

What Young Men may do. Our relief from political evils depends upon our young men. We need a generous infusion into the body politic of clear-sighted observers and students of public affairs. If men were better informed they would be more interested. Ignorance and apathy go hand in hand.

Gladstone was trained to statecraft from a boy. He relates that when he was a lad of twelve, his father began for him a systematic course of instruction in the science of government. An hour was devoted each day to a lesson in politics and finance. Guests at the Gladstone home were surprised to see the father, an eminent banker and a member of Parliament, proposing grave and complicated problems, which the son examined and discussed with marvelous ability and enthusiasm. When, a few years later, he was a student at Eton, his political training was continued, and when at Oxford he gained no small

celebrity as a debator and orator. At the early age of twenty we find him sitting in Parliament, and two years later he was named by Peel as junior lord of the treasury. His steadfast aim was to bring Christian ideals into politics. His whole career was an attempt to reconcile politics with the Sermon on the Mount. Could the young men of this generation in America catch his spirit, our political ills would vanish. *John E. Bradley, Work and Play.*

III Tact

David a Tactful Man. Our word *tact* comes from the Latin *tangere, tactum,* a verb meaning *to touch.* It refers sometimes to a physical faculty, the sense of touch, but more often to a mental faculty, the sensitive mental touch. Webster defines tact as "peculiar skill or faculty; a nice perception or discernment; a ready power of appreciating and doing what is required by circumstances." The right deed that is done at the right time and in the right way is a tactful deed. It is not easy to define tact in a few words but it is easy to illustrate it. In a story about Irish life Miss Barlow has a capital illustration. She is telling us about an old woman who has seen better days and is very proud but who now is so poor that she has not enough to eat. Two of her neighbors wish to help her. One brings her some potatoes with the remark that she can not well afford to spare them, but she can not see her neighbor want. The other comes in and borrows a dish and as she thanks her for the favor asks her to try some of her new potatoes. Whose gift do you think the poor woman accepted?

Of all the Old Testament characters from Genesis to Samuel, the most tactful one is David. When the women praised him so as to arouse the king's jealousy, the court would naturally be opposed to him, too, but he behaved himself so wisely that he won the devoted love of Jonathan, the prince, and of all the people. When he was made a captain over the warriors, his popularity increased. When he was hunted from place to place as an outlaw, the disaffected men of the kingdom joined him, and these brave but turbulent companions he kept in check and won their loyal devotion. All who came near him seem to have felt the charm of his personality, and this could only mean that he possessed the "peculiar skill or faculty" called tact in dealing with men.

It is true that deceit often marked his dealings with others, especially in his connection with Achish the king of Gath. Friends and enemies alike he deceived, and he made use of a falsehood when he thought it would serve him. This was not tact, it was lying, but in our judgment of this sin of his we must not fail to remember that he lived in an age when lying was considered justifiable, even necessary, and a skilful liar lost not in others' esteem.

As we choose to look at it, David's message to the men of Jabesh-gilead may be regarded as a selfish bid for power, or as a genuinely sincere appreciation of their devoted deed, and a tactful presentation of the situation. But surely no one can read his magnificent ode on the death of Saul and Jonathan without being convinced of the depth of David's feeling for them. His love for Jonathan no one can doubt; doubtless he mourned Jonathan's death far more than that of Saul, but he seemed to have forgotten his own wrongs and to have thought of Saul as he once deserved to be thought of. He keenly appreciated the deed of the Jabeshites, and he honestly desired to requite this kindness. It was kind and tactful to tell them so. Tact is largely a matter of

thoughtfulness, and this David possessed in a great degree. He was ever on the alert to requite a kindness, whether to Mephibosheth for his father Jonathan's sake, or to Chimham for Barzillai, his father's sake, or to the Jabeshites for Saul's and Jonathan's sakes. He did the right thing in the right way at the right time.

Tactless Words. "Sayin' de right thing at de right time am a great gif, but not sayin' anything at de right time am moz ez good an er heap mo' reli'ble," a colored philosopher is reported to have said. One who is thoughtful of others' feelings, will have fewer tactless words to regret than the one who says what he thinks without thoughtful consideration of the one to whom he says them.

How much unhappiness a well-meaning but tactless person can cause in this world! "See what a pretty piece of silk I purchased yesterday, and it was inexpensive, too," a friend says, only to be told in reply, "That kind of silk is reduced because it is going out of style; it will be still lower soon, and will become dreadfully common." "I have just been reading this book, and I have enjoyed it greatly for I found it very helpful," another one remarks, and the tactless person replies, "Why, that book is very poorly written and is so commonplace; don't let any one know that you admire it." Is not he a thief who needlessly deprives another of his satisfaction and pleasure? Is not he a blessing whose thoughtfulness, or tact, adds to another's comfort and happiness?

Sincerity the Soul of Tact. "I grease the wheels of life with money," said a wealthy man, "and my wife does it with politeness. She gets along with far less friction than I do, however." There are natures so gracious that the patience and kindliness of good-breeding seem theirs by inheritance. What is tact but skill in discerning what will be agreeable and helpful to somebody else? It includes kindliness, and then it is one of the elements of the highest breeding, and an ornament to any character. Christianity includes many pagan virtues, but tact is the flower of them all. A good deed done without a proper method may do great harm. Great causes suffer more from tactless enthusiasts than from virulent enemies. Sincerity is the soul of spiritual tact. This with kindliness, will enable a person to move the little world around him to beautiful and gracious ends. Consider what other people care for. Study their histories. Remember their little things. Prove that you remember them by your words and deeds. *The Youth's Companion.*

A Beautiful Instance of Tact. I went to Music Hall about eight, and saw an audience of quite two thousand people — the place jammed, and two hundred and fifty clergymen and bishops on the platform. Cold shudders ran down my back. However, I knew my subject, or thought I did, and I was going to speak without notes — something I have never done since. My turn came after Father Benson, of Oxford. The whole place looked black to me; I got up, stammered and sputtered for five or six minutes — my time was twenty-five minutes — and sat down. I am not exaggerating this; I did not say one clear sentence that would parse in that time. I sat down in darkness and the meeting went on. At last people began to go, then men began to leave the platform; I did not know a soul. I sat there utterly cast down — a lonely youth indeed. All at once a large hand was laid on my shoulder, and a big, kind voice said: "Mr. Rainsford, will you preach for me in Trinity Church next Sunday morning?" That was my first meeting with Phillips Brooks. Was it any wonder I loved him? *W. S. Rainsford, A Preacher's Story of his Work.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

"Death is the power which destroys all hate and all ambition, before whom the shepherd's crook lies beside the king's sceptre."

All things come round to him who will but wait. *Longfellow.*

Obedience is the fruit of faith; patience, the bloom on the fruit. *Christina Rossetti.*

He has attained to an eminent degree of Christian grace who knows how to wait. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

Lord! who Thy thousand years dost wait
To work the thousandth part
Of thy vast plan, for us create
With zeal a patient heart. *Newman.*

It will not do for the Christian to be simply conscientious; he must also be tactful and wise, if he hopes to be a blessing. *O. F. Bartholomew.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

He chose David also his servant.
And took him from the sheep-folds.
From following the ewes that had their young he brought him,
To be shepherd of Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.
So he was their shepherd according to the integrity of his heart,
And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands. Psa. 78. 70–72.

In malice be ye babes, but in mind be men. 1 Cor. 14. 20.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity. Psa. 133. 1.

Wait for Jehovah, be strong and let thy heart take courage; yea, wait thou for Jehovah. Psa. 27. 14.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

To do the right thing may be my earnest desire, but am I equally desirous of doing it in the right way? Am I wise and tactful in my dealings with others?

"Oh, the little more and how much it is,
And the little less, and what worlds away,"

exclaims Browning. The lack of thoughtful consideration of others, the failure to endeavor to put oneself in another's place, is the "little less" that takes from a good deed and renders it "worlds away" from what it might have been.

I must never be disheartened because God's promises seem slow in their fulfillment, nor discouraged in my work for God because I can not see results.

THE LESSON STORY

The death of Saul made it safe for David to return again to his own country. After asking and receiving divine direction, he went northward with all his household and all his men and settled in Hebron. Hither came the men of Judah and anointed him king over their tribe. They told David, among other things, how the men of Jabesh-gilead had rescued Saul's body and given it burial. Grateful to them for this kindness, and wishing also to win their good

will, David sent messengers through whom he thanked them for their good deed and promised to reward them. He urged them to show themselves strong and valiant men in this crisis in national affairs, and reminded them that Saul their lord was dead and he had been anointed king over the tribe of Judah. The effect of this message we are not told, but the men of Jabesh, like all the other northern tribesmen, united their fortunes with those of Ish-bosheth, Saul's fourth son whom Abner, the captain of the army, had taken across the Jordan and proclaimed king at Mahanaim.

For seven years and a half there was a dual kingdom in Israel, and there were continual feuds between the rival generals, Abner on the north and Joab on the south, though we have the record of only one battle. David seems to have kept out of the contests. His power continually increased, while that of Ish-bosheth, who seems to have been only a tool in the hands of Abner, decreased. Whether from selfish motives, because he saw that Ish-bosheth's star was waning, or because he resented the suspicion of Ish-bosheth that he was seeking the throne in claiming for himself the widowed Rizpah, one of Saul's wives, Abner made overtures to David to make him king of the northern tribes. David demanded as proof of his loyalty that his former wife Michal, Saul's daughter, should be returned to him, for as the son-in-law of Saul he would be heir to Saul's throne. Abner seems to have compelled Ish-bosheth to bring this about. Abner visited Hebron and, after being hospitably entertained, departed. Joab, David's powerful general who had long vowed vengeance against Abner because he had slain his brother Asahel, caused him to return by a false message, and then treacherously slew him. David mourned his death. Ish-bosheth could not long maintain his kingdom without Abner. The disaffection grew until suddenly in the stillness of an eastern noontime two of his captains entered his room and stabbed their king as he slumbered. In great haste they carried his head to David as a welcome present, and met the same fate that he meted out to the Amalekite who claimed to have slain Saul.

Then all the other tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and anointed him their king. Three reasons they gave for doing this; they were his kinsmen, while Saul was their king David had been their military leader, and the Lord had said that David should shepherd the people of Israel. A solemn covenant was entered into between David and these elders. David was thirty years old when made king of Judah, over whom he reigned seven and a half years, and then yet thirty-three years longer he reigned over all Israel and Judah. And David went on and grew great, and the Lord of Hosts was with him.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. David's "In Memoriam," the "Song of the Bow."
2. The two generals, Joab and Abner, and their relations to the two kings.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

If you are to have a written review, assign the topics to-day and let the papers be read in class next Sunday. An interesting review may be held by assigning the eleven lessons to eleven different pupils, letting each one tell the story in his own words next week. Or let the reviews given in this book be memorized.

LESSON XII — SEPTEMBER 20

REVIEW

Read Psalm 18

Golden Text for the Quarter

And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake. II Sam. 5. 12.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE UNITED KINGDOM UNDER SAUL

(A suggestion. Let each of the following sections be committed to memory by a pupil, and on Review Sunday let the twenty-one pupils together come before the school and recite in order the paragraphs learned.)

Lesson I. Because of the age of Samuel, their judge, and of the wickedness of his sons, and of their own desire to be like the nations round about, the people demanded of Samuel a king. After taking the matter to the Lord in prayer, and being instructed to yield to their demand, Samuel first warned them of the results of their having a king. He would be a despot, who would take their sons for military and court service, their daughters for domestic service, their lands for court favorites, a tenth of their produce for his support and that of his retinue, and a number of them as slaves to maintain the royal dignity. The people would not be dissuaded, they would have their own way, they demanded again a king such as other nations had to judge them and to fight their battles. Samuel received divine instruction to yield to them.

Saul, "a goodly young man," of the tribe of Benjamin, was sent by his father to find some asses that had strayed away. Saul consulted Samuel, and was entertained and kept over night as an honored guest, for it had been revealed to the prophet that Saul was to be the first king. The next day Samuel accompanied Saul on his way, anointed him, gave him "signs" that came to pass afterwards, and directed him to go to Gilgal and await his coming.

Lesson II. Samuel called the people together at Mizpah, reminded them of all God had done for them as a people, warned them that they were now rejecting Him, and then chose Saul for their king. Saul had hidden among the baggage, but they found and brought him forth. He was a head taller than all the people, and Samuel said to them, "See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" "Long live the king!" the people shouted. Samuel wrote what we may call a constitution of the kingdom, which was carefully preserved. When he dismissed the people, a band of loyal men accompanied the king to his home. Not all, however, accepted him, for there were certain worthless fellows who refused to acknowledge his sovereignty, but Saul wisely paid no heed to them.

Saul was returning from his customary labor in the field one day, when he learned that the Ammonites were besieging the town of Jabesh

in Gilead, and unless help came the people must surrender and have their right eyes put out. Saul showed himself prompt to act and skilful in carrying out his plans. He quickly gathered a great army, marched against the Ammonites, and utterly routed them.

Lesson III. It was a favorable time after Saul's victory over the Ammonites solemnly to ratify the new government, and Samuel called a gathering of the people at Gilgal for this purpose. In his farewell address as judge he appealed to their knowledge of his perfect integrity, and asked them if he had ever taken an ox or an ass, or if he had ever defrauded or oppressed any one, or if he had ever taken a bribe. The people affirmed that he had done none of these things. After reciting the benefits the Israelites as a nation had received from Jehovah, and reminding them that when their fathers turned aside from serving Him they were duly punished, Samuel insisted once more that they themselves had done wickedly in demanding a king. A thunder storm in the time of wheat harvest in answer to his prayer, he urged as a sign of divine displeasure, and the people admitted that they had done wrong and besought him to pray for them. Samuel told them that they need not fear, that God would not forsake His chosen people, and that he himself would not cease to pray for them and to instruct them. They need only in future fear the Lord and serve Him, but if they did wickedly they should perish.

Jonathan, Saul's son, by his attack on the Philistine garrison at Geba and his bold attack of the Philistines at Michmash, made it possible for Saul to pursue the fleeing enemy and win a great victory. Saul would have kept a rashly made vow and slain his son for unwittingly disobeying his order to observe a fast on the day of the battle, but the people interposed and saved Jonathan.

Saul was directed utterly to destroy the Amalekites and all their possessions, but he and the people spared Agag and the best of their animals. Samuel was angry and disappointed when he learned this. He sought the king at Gilgal to declare to him the penalty of his disobedience.

Lesson IV. Saul greeted the prophet and assured him that he had fulfilled the command of the Lord. When Samuel asked what the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen meant, Saul answered that the people had spared them from the spoil of the Amalekites that they might sacrifice them to the Lord. Samuel told him that he had been placed at the head of the tribes and it was his duty to carry out God's command and utterly destroy the Amalekites. Saul repeated that he had done this, having saved only Agag the king, and again asserted that the people were to blame for sparing the best of the oxen and sheep. "To obey is better than sacrifice," Samuel told him; because he had disobeyed the kingdom should be taken from him. Then Saul confessed that he had sinned, and begged Samuel to come and worship with him; when Samuel refused and started to leave, Saul seized his robe and tore it. That was a symbol, Samuel told him, of the tearing from him of the kingdom, which should be given to a better man than he.

Saul repeated his confession of sin, and urged Samuel to honor him before the people and turn and worship with him. Samuel yielded and went with Saul. Then he ordered Agag to be brought, and after slaying him he went back to Ramah, and never visited him again.

Lesson V. Samuel was divinely impelled to go to Bethlehem and there anoint one of the sons of Jesse to succeed Saul when the right time should

come. Fearing lest Saul should kill him were he to learn the main object of his visit, he took with him a heifer for a public sacrifice. To the question of the elders of the city, who trembled lest he had come to judge them, he answered that he had come peaceably and bade them prepare for the sacrifice. He himself saw that Jesse and his sons were made ceremonially clean. Jesse brought seven of his sons, one by one, before him. At first he was tempted by the appearance of Eliab to anoint him king, but in a dialogue which took place in his inner consciousness between himself and God, it was made clear to him that he must judge as God judges, not by outward appearance but by inward worth. Learning that there was yet another son, the youngest, who was away keeping the sheep, he determined to await his coming. At sight of David his inward monitor told him that this was the Lord's choice. He anointed David in the presence of his brothers, and David felt from that time onward that his life was dedicated to God's service.

After Samuel left him, Saul the king became very melancholy. David, who was known to be a skilful player on the harp, was sent for to cheer him with his music. Saul loved him and made him his armor-bearer. David had gone back to his father at Bethlehem, and his three oldest brothers were in Saul's army, when the Philistines came to wage war against the Israelites. The two armies were drawn up in battle array on opposite hills. David was sent with food to his brothers, and heard Goliath, a giant Philistine, challenge some Israelite to come and fight him and thus decide the fate of the camps. Daily for forty days he had defied the Israelites, and no one was brave enough to accept his challenge. David offered to go and fight him, and only secured permission from Saul to do so after he had told how he had slain a lion and a bear, and had declared that God who had been his Helper in these contests would help him kill the Philistine.

Lesson VI. Saul had his armor put on David, but he was not used to it. He put it off and advanced to meet Goliath with only his staff and sling and five stones in his bag. The giant, who was heavily armed, scorned his youthful antagonist, and vowed that he would soon give his body to the birds of prey and the wild beasts. David told him that the battle was the Lord's, that God was fighting for him, and he should win the battle. Swiftly David hurled a stone from his sling and hit the giant in the forehead, and the giant fell.

David then seized the giant's sword and cut off his head; this trophy of battle he had in his hand when he was brought before Saul. While David was talking with Saul, Jonathan, Saul's son, loved David. The two young men made a covenant of friendship one with the other, Jonathan giving to David his robe and sword and bow.

Lesson VII. After the slaughter of the Philistine, the women of Israel came out with great joy to meet the returning warriors. As they played on their instruments of music, one chorus sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands," and the other chorus responded, "And David his ten thousands." "What!" said Saul, "they ascribe to David ten thousands and to me but thousands! What can he have more but the kingdom?" and from that day he looked on David with jealous suspicion. On the morrow a violent frenzy possessed the king, and David tried to calm him as at other times with his music. Saul hurled a spear at him. Twice David avoided the blow, and Saul perceived that the Lord was with David, and he was afraid of him. Saul could no

longer endure the sight of his rival, as he thought David to be, and appointed him captain over a thousand warriors, hoping that in the new post of danger something would befall him. But David behaved wisely, and his popularity increased, until all the tribes knew and loved him.

His promise to give Merab, his elder daughter, to David as his wife, Saul failed to keep, but he gave him Michal, his younger daughter, after David had slain a hundred Philistines as ordered. Saul now commanded Jonathan to slay David; Jonathan told his father that David was innocent of any act against him, and Saul agreed to spare him. Next, Saul sent messengers to David's home with orders to kill him, but with his wife's help David escaped to Samuel at Ramah.

Lesson VIII. From Ramah David returned to see Jonathan. Jonathan could not believe that his father still sought David's life, and the two friends formed a plan by which Jonathan could learn his father's purpose and communicate it to David. David hid in the field and Jonathan went home. Saul questioned Jonathan in regard to David's absence from a religious festival which was being held, and when Jonathan made an excuse for him, Saul's anger knew no bounds. With coarse and bitter words he told Jonathan that David would keep him from the throne, and that his own purpose was to kill David. When Jonathan asked what David had done, his father hurled a spear at him. Jonathan escaped the blow, and left in anger. The next day he went to the field where David was, carried out his plan of informing him of his danger by calling to the lad whom he sent to gather up the arrows he had shot, that the arrows were beyond him and he must make haste and stay not. After Jonathan sent the lad back to the city with his weapons, the friends met for a sorrowful farewell. Jonathan went home and David fled to Nob.

From the priest at Nob David obtained the shew-bread to eat and Goliath's sword out of the sanctuary. The priest and all the others at Nob paid for this kindness with their lives, when Saul learned what had been done. David became the leader of a band of outlaws at Adullam, and with their help he rescued the town of Keilah from the Philistines. He spared Saul's life when he might have taken it at Engedi. Abigail, the wife of Nabal, a prosperous shepherd whom he had aided, gave him a large tribute which Nabal had churlishly refused him, and after Nabal's death, Abigail became his wife. Samuel died and was buried at Ramah.

Lesson IX. Into the wilderness of Ziph, Saul came in pursuit of David with three thousand men. With only one companion David ventured into the camp of the enemy at night, made his way by the sleeping warriors who surrounded the king, seized Saul's spear and cruse of water as trophies of his visit, and made his escape without arousing any one. Then from the top of a neighboring hill he called out to Abner and taunted him for not keeping better watch over the king, and told him that he had the king's spear and cruse. It was still dark, but Saul recognized David's voice and called him by name. Then David pleaded with him for his life. He had been driven out from the land of Israel, and such persecution was unworthy of the king. Impressed by David's generosity in sparing his life when he could easily have slain him, Saul confessed that he had done evil, and promised not to harm David. David had learned by long experience that Saul's penitent moods would not last, and he answered that as he had spared the king's life because he was God's anointed,

so God would spare him and deliver him out of his troubles. With a word of blessing, Saul returned to his home, and David went his way.

David fled to Achish, king of Gath, and received from him the town of Ziklag. While there David waged war with the Amalekites and others in the south, and brought the spoil to Achish, claiming that he had taken it from his own people and their allies. The Philistines prepared for a united campaign against Israel, and Achish bade David join him in the attack. The other Philistine princes would not trust David, however, and they compelled Achish to send him back. On reaching Ziklag David found that the town had been destroyed by the Amalekites, and the women and children carried away captive. David pursued and routed them, and recovered all they had taken. Some of the spoil he sent as a present to the elders of Judah. Meanwhile the Philistines had pitched their camp in Shunem and the Israelites theirs on Gilboa. The night before the battle Saul paid a visit to the witch of Endor and heard a voice, which he took to be that of Samuel, declare that the Lord had deserted him, the battle would go against the Israelites, and he and his sons would perish.

Lesson X. The Philistines drove the Israelites up Mount Gilboa. Jonathan and two brothers were killed, and Saul, realizing that the archers of the enemy were making him their aim, begged his armor-bearer to slay him that he might not fall wounded into the enemy's hands. The armor-bearer refused, and when Saul fell on his own sword and died, he followed his example. The Israelite warriors fled. Seeing this, the people who were dwelling in the cities on the other side of the valley forsook them and the Philistines took possession of them. The day after the battle the Philistines came to strip the slain, and found the bodies of Saul and his sons. They cut off Saul's head and sent it around to their cities as a glad trophy of war. His armor they put in the house of the Ashtaroth, and his body and those of his sons they fastened to the walls of the city of Bethshan. When the men of Jabesh-gilead learned what had been done to the members of the royal household, they rescued their bodies and brought them to their city for burial.

The news of the death of Saul and of Jonathan was brought to David at Ziklag by an Amalekite, who claimed that at Saul's request he had put him to death. He brought Saul's crown and bracelet to David and expected a reward, but David had him put to death for killing Saul. In words of great beauty and depth of feeling David lamented the death of Jonathan and Saul.

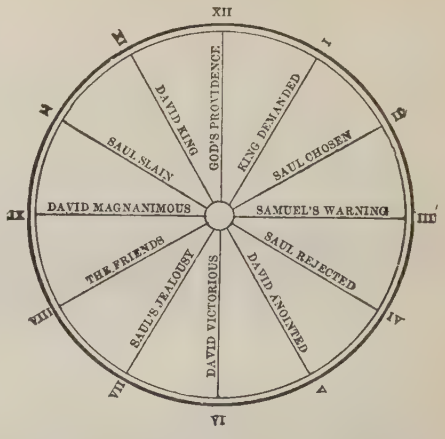
Lesson XI. After seeking divine guidance, David and his household went northward to Hebron and settled there. The men of Judah anointed him king over their tribe. To the men of Jabesh-gilead David sent a message of gratitude for their kindness to Saul, and announced to them that he had been made king over Judah. Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, was made king over the rest of the Israelites at Mahanaim across the Jordan. Civil war was waged for a few years between the adherents of the house of Saul and those of David. Abner, Ish-bosheth's general, quarreled with him and deserted him for David, only to be murdered by Joab, David's general. After Ish-bosheth was murdered by two of his captains (whom David put to death for their deed), the other tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and made him king over all Israel. David transferred his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem.

AN OUTLINE OF THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

I. The Leadership of Samuel.
   1. The Demand of the People for a King. I.
   2. Saul Chosen King. II.

II. The Reign of Saul.
   1. Samuel's Warning. III.
   2. Saul's Rejection by the Lord. IV.
   3. David Anointed at Bethlehem. V.
   4. David's Victory over Goliath. VI.
   5. Saul's Attempt to Kill David. VII.
   6. Friendship of David and Jonathan. VIII.
   7. David's Sparing of Saul's Life. IX. 8. Death of Saul and Jonathan. X.

III. The Reign of David. 1. King over Judah and over Israel. XI.



REVIEW OUTLINES OF THE LESSONS

1. Israel Asks for a King.
   - A Picture of a King. 10–18.
   - The Demand of the People. 19, 20.
   - God's Counsel. 21, 22.

2. Saul Chosen King.
   - Samuel's Address. 17–19.
   - Selection of Saul. 20–24.
   - Saul's Departure. 25–27.

3. Samuel Warns Saul and the People.
   - Samuel's Record. 1–5.
   - Israel's Sin and Confession. 6–19.
   - Promises and Warnings. 19–25.

4. Saul Rejected by the Lord.
   - Saul's Excuse. 13–15.
   - Samuel's Rebuke. 16–23.
   - Vain Pleading. 24–28.

5. David Anointed at Bethlehem.
   - Samuel sent to Jesse. 1–5.
   - The Sons of Jesse. 5–10.
   - David Chosen. 11–13.

6. David and Goliath.
   - Preparation for Battle. 38–40.
   - Battle with Words. 41–47.
   - Battle with Weapons. 48, 49.

7. Saul Tries to Kill David.
   - Saul's Jealousy. 6–9.
   - David in Danger. 10, 11.
   - David Made Captain. 12–16.

8. Friendship of David and Jonathan.
   - Saul's Anger. 30–34.
   - Jonathan's Signal. 35–40.
   - The Parting. 41, 42.

9. David Spares Saul's Life.
   - David's Pleading. 17–20.
   - Saul's Confession. 21, 25.
   - The Lord's Award. 22–24.

10. Saul and Jonathan Slain in Battle.
   - Their Death. 1–7.
   - The Dead Dishonored. 8–10.
   - The Dead Honored. 11–13.

11. David Made King over Judah and Israel.
   - King of Judah. 2. 1–4.
   - Message of Thanks. 2. 4–7.
   - King over Israel. 5. 1–5.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. Why did the people of Israel want a king? Who was their ruler at this time? What did they ask him to do? To whom did he go for counsel? What did he tell the people the king would do? What was the answer of the people? What did God bid Samuel do? What does the Golden Text mean?

2. Who was chosen king? Where? How did Saul differ from the rest of the people? What did Samuel say about him? What did the people say? Where did Saul go? Who went with him? How did some of the people show their dissatisfaction? What did Saul do? What is the Golden Text?

3. What did Samuel ask the people about his honesty as their judge? What did the people say? What did he tell them they must do in order to prosper? What strange event then happened? Of what did it convince the people? What did they ask Samuel to do for them? What did he urge them to do in the words of the Golden Text?

4. What enemy was Saul told to conquer? What was he told to do with the people and the spoil? How did he disobey the command? What question did Samuel ask him? What excuse did Saul make for himself? What excuse for the people? How did Samuel rebuke him? What did Samuel say should be his punishment? How did Saul try to keep Samuel? What happened? Of what did Samuel say this was a sign? What is the Golden Text?

5. To what city was Samuel sent to anoint a king? To what man? What relation was he to Ruth, the Moabitess? Who feared to see Samuel coming? What did Samuel tell them to do? How many sons of Jesse did he see without finding the right one? Why did he almost choose the oldest? The words of the Golden Text guided him in his choice; what are they? What do these words mean? Where was Jesse's youngest son meanwhile? What was his name? What did Samuel do to him?

6. When David was getting ready to fight Goliath, how did Saul try to help him? Instead of Saul's sword what did David take with him? How was Goliath prepared? Why did he scorn David? What did he say to him? In whose name did David say he was fighting? Whose did he say would be the victory? How did David kill the giant? What is the Golden Text?

7. Who came to greet King Saul on his return from victory? What did they sing? What did Saul say about their words? How did he feel toward David? What did he try to do to David? When he failed, what did he think was the reason? What is the Golden Text? What did Saul then do with David? How did David now act? What did all the people think of him?

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

8. Why did Saul become very angry at his son Jonathan one day? What did he say David would take from Jonathan? What was Jonathan's answer? What did Saul try to do to Jonathan? Where did Jonathan go the next day? Who was in hiding there? What did Jonathan do and say to let David know that he must flee from Saul? What is the Golden Text?

9. What possessions of the king did David carry away one night after a visit to his camp? How did Saul learn what he had done? When David rebuked him for seeking to take his life, what did Saul answer? By whom did David say he should be rewarded? What is the Golden Text?

10. Where was a great battle fought between the Israelites and the Philistines? Who were victorious? Who were slain in that battle? How did Saul meet his death? What is the Golden Text? What did the Philistines do to his body? What did the men of Jabesh-gilead do?

11. Where was David made king over the tribe of Judah? What message did he send to the men of Jabesh-gilead? Who was king for a time over the rest of the Israelites? How long was David king at Hebron? How long did he reign over all Israel? What is the Golden Text?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. What were all the reasons given by the people to justify their demand for a king? What parallel to the actions of his sons had Samuel witnessed in his youth? Were the people wrong in wishing to have a king? In the way they made their wish known? In any of their reasons for wishing to have a king? What despotic measures did Samuel tell them a king would adopt? What was the result of his attempted dissuasion?

2. Where did Samuel call an assembly of the people? Of what did he remind them? How was the king chosen? Why was the choice satisfactory? Who were dissatisfied? How did Samuel try to limit the king's power?

3. Why did Samuel call an assembly at Gilgal? How had his integrity in official life been shown? By what phrase did he designate Saul? What part of the history of the Israelites did he recall? How did he make the people admit that they had sinned in asking for a king? What reassuring words did he speak to them? What words of warning?

4. What commission had Saul received through Samuel? Who were the Amalekites? Why were they to be utterly destroyed? Why was their property to be destroyed? What excuse did Saul make for not wholly obeying directions? How did Samuel answer his excuse? What did he say about the virtue of obedience and the sin of disobedience? What was the penalty meted out to Saul? Was his repentance sincere?

5. To what family and what city did David belong? What was Samuel's primary purpose in going to Bethlehem at this time? What was his secondary purpose? What did he mean by telling the people to sanctify themselves? How did he arrive at the conclusion that none of Jesse's seven older sons was "the Lord's anointed"? After the anointing of David it is said that "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him"; what does this mean?

6. Where were the Israelites and Philistines encamped? What challenge did the champion of the Philistines make to the Israelites? What was the effect on the Israelites? How did David secure permission to engage in combat with Goliath? Describe Goliath. Describe David as he advanced to meet him. What were Goliath's words? David's? The result of the contest?

7. How were Israelite warriors returning from a victory welcomed? What was the manner of the singing? What were the words on one occasion in regard to Saul and David? What effect did this praise have on Saul? To what did his jealousy lead him? What was his purpose in making David a captain? What was the result?

8. How was Jonathan convinced that his father was determined to kill David? How did he let David know that he must flee? Describe the parting of the friends.

9. Narrate the story of David's sparing Saul's life at Ziph. How did he make known to Saul what he had done? Give their conversation with each other. What promise did Saul make? Why did not David trust him?

10. What two accounts are given of the way in which Saul met his death? How may they be reconciled? What was the result of the battle of Gilboa? How did the Philistines treat the royal dead? Why were the men of Jabesh-gilead grateful to Saul? How did they show their gratitude?

11. Over what tribe was David first made king? How long did he rule Judah only? Where was the rival kingdom established? Who was its king? Who were the rival generals? How did Ish-bosheth meet his death? What reasons did the other tribes of Israel give for asking David to be their king? How long did he reign over all Israel?

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

After picturing the scene of each lesson, let the pupils give Title and Text.

1. An aged man is giving a long talk to a great gathering of people. He stops, and they all cry out as with one voice, in a very emphatic way. Again there is the same gathering of people, and the aged man is dismissing them.

2. I see another large gathering of people. They are very quiet, for some solemn ceremony is being carried out. Now there is great running hither and thither, and next some men appear bringing with them a very tall man. An aged man points to him, and the people give a joyous shout.

3. Here there is still another great gathering of people, to whom this same aged man is talking earnestly. Suddenly a great thunder storm comes upon them and the people are greatly afraid, but the aged man is telling them they need not fear.

4. Here this aged man and a tall man are talking together. I can hear the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen not far away. Now the aged man has started to go away, and the other man is holding on to him by his robe.

5. This same aged man is approaching a city, and he has a heifer with him. From the city many men have come out to meet him. In a second scene I see him pouring something on the head of a lad who kneels before him; there are several other young men and an older man looking on.

6. Here there are two scenes. In the first, a young lad is trying on a suit of armor, but he does not seem to like it, and soon he takes it off. In the second I see a broad valley through the center of which runs a stream. On the hill tops on either side of the valley there are camps. From one camp a young man comes down into the valley and stoops to pick up some stones and put them into a bag. From the other camp a giant comes and stands before the youth. The two talk together. Suddenly the young man hurls a stone.

7. There is a great procession of joyous people, and women playing on

musical instruments and dancing and singing go to meet them. The scene changes to the interior of a house where a gloomy man seems to be listening to a young man playing upon a harp, but all at once he hurls a spear at the player, who dodges the blow. In the third scene this young man is at the head of a company of soldiers.

8. Here an angry man is speaking bitter words to a younger one, and ere long he throws a spear at him, but fails to hit him. Now I see the young man shooting arrows in a field, and a lad is running to gather them up. The lad has now disappeared, and the young man is clasped in the arms of another young man.

9. On the top of a hill a man stands holding a spear and a cruse for water in his hand. He is talking with another man a long way off.

10. A great battle is in progress, and many men have been slain. Suddenly a tall man hurls himself upon his spear and falls, and then another man near by does the same thing. Now the battle is over, and men are going about gathering up the weapons and other things of value which they find on the dead bodies. Several bodies they carry off, after cutting off the head of one of them and stripping it of its armor. Next I see a band of men stealthily approaching the walls of a city. From the walls they take four bodies that are fastened to them, and steal away again. Now they are burying the bodies under a great tree.

11. In two scenes the same man is being anointed, but the place and the people are not the same in each.

SUBJECTS FOR WRITTEN REVIEW

1. The conditions in Israel and in the neighboring kingdoms that led to the establishment of the monarchy.
2. An appreciation of Samuel.
3. Despotism in the East.
4. The Philistines.
5. The strength and the weakness of Saul.
6. The Israelites at the beginning and at the end of Saul's reign.
7. David's early life.
8. David's life at court.
9. David in exile.
10. In what respects David was "a man after God's own heart."
11. An appreciation of Jonathan.
12. The first book of Samuel.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Tell the parable of the vineyard with which the fifth chapter of Isaiah begins. 2. Tell the parable of the vineyard given by Jesus. (Matt. 21. 33–46.) 3. Look up these references which show that the ancient Israelites were prone to the sin of drunkenness: Prov. 21. 17, 23, 29–32; Eccles. 10. 17; Isa. 28. 7. 4. Tell the story of Belshazzar's drunken feast and its result. (Dan. 5.) 5. Of what verse of the next lesson is the scoffing thief on the cross an illustration? (10.) 6. What other Bible verses would be appropriate Golden Texts for the next lesson?

LESSON XIII — SEPTEMBER 27

TEMPERANCE LESSON

Isaiah 5. 11–23. Commit vv. 22, 23.

Golden Text

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging. Prov. 20. 1.

LESSON TEXT Isaiah 5. 11–23

11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, *till* wine inflame them!
12 And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.
13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because *they* have no knowledge: and their honourable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.
14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.
15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.
16 But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.
17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.
18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:
19 That say, Let him make speed, *and* hasten his work, that we may see *it:* and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know *it!*
20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
21 Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!
22 Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:
23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

11. *Rise up early that they may follow strong drink.* Both Jews and Romans considered drinking in the morning disreputable, and intoxication at an early hour indicated confirmed intemperance. Compare Acts 2. 15. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day. *Continue until night.* R. V., *tarry late into the night. Till wine inflame them.* Compare the apt Indian phrase, fire-water.

12. *Viol.* R. V., *lute.* "Guitar is the general name of such instruments which have their strings drawn upon a bridge over a sounding board." *Delitzsch. Tabret.* A small drum. *They regard not the work of the Lord.* They pay no

heed to that which Isaiah plainly foresees — their impending destruction. *Neither consider.* R. V., *neither have they considered.* Compare Psa. 28. 5.

13. *Therefore.* Because they are blind to the evil fate before them. *My people are gone into captivity.* "In the Hebrew it is the perfect of certitude." *Cheyne. Captivity.* The exile in Babylon. *Because they have no knowledge.* R. V., *for lack of knowledge.* Without foreseeing their fate. *Their honorable men . . . their multitude.* "Literally, its glory . . . its tumult." *Skinner. Dried up.* R. V., *parched.*

14. *Hell hath enlarged herself.* R. V., *Sheol hath enlarged its desire.* "The underworld, the abode of the dead. To understand this passage we must remember that there was a two-fold conception of Sheol, or Hades. First, it was localized underground. Hence one of the synonyms for Hades, both in Hebrew and Assyrian, is "the pit." Next, it was conceived of as a person. The two conceptions are very closely connected; thus the Greek Hades and the Teutonic Hel were variously applied to the infernal ruler and to his or her, kingdom." *Cheyne. Opened her mouth without measure.* R. V., *its mouth.* Enlarged its capacity without limit. So many of the Jews would meet death by famine, thirst, and the sword, that in poetic fancy the regions of the dead would need to be enlarged to receive them. *He that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.* R. V., *he that rejoiceth among them, descend into it.*

15, 16. "These verses seem to be parenthetical. They are mainly taken from 2, 9, 11, 17, but with a modification of their meaning." *Cheyne. Shall be brought down.* R. V., *is bowed down. The mighty man shall be humbled.* R. V., *the great man is humbled. The lofty shall be humbled.* R. V., *The lofty are humbled. Shall be exalted in judgment.* R. V., *is exalted in justice. God that is holy shall be sanctified.* R. V., *God the Holy One is sanctified.* By His righteous judgments God's true nature shall be clearly seen.

17. *After their manner.* R. V., *as in their pasture. Strangers.* R. V., *wanderers.* R. V., margin, *sojourners.* "This verse gives the obverse of the picture in verse 14. The city with all its tumult and gaiety has vanished into the underworld, and now flocks are seen grazing amidst the ruins — an image of awful desolation rather than 'idyllic peace.'" *Skinner.* "Considering that the Holy Land is at present a great pasture-ground for tribes of Arab shepherds, and that the modern Jerusalem, which has been built out of rubbish, is a Mohammedan city, what verse 17 prophesies has been literally fulfilled." *Delitzsch.*

18. *Vanity.* R. V., *falsehood.* "Probably the true idea is that of the ancient interpretation of the rabbis, 'An evil inclination is at first like a fine hair string, but the finishing like a cart rope.' At first they draw sin with a slender cord; then they go on to greater deeds of iniquity that urge them on, and draw them with main strength, as with a cart rope. They make a strong effort to commit iniquity." *Barnes.* "These men allow themselves to be yoked to sin like beasts of burden." *Cheyne.* "The figure seems to express two ideas: (1) The determination with which these men set themselves to work iniquity; (2) the inevitable connection between sin and judgment." *Skinner.*

19. *Let him make speed.* In their defiant unbelief of divine retribution they scoff at God, and challenge Him to fulfil the words of the prophet.

20. "A woe on those who confound, or rather reverse, the distinctions of good and evil, who say 'Fair is foul and foul is fair.' Compare Job 17. 12. They defended the social changes of the time as both necessary and right.

The development of commerce and luxury, the centralization of capital, and the impoverishment of small proprietors, were odious to Isaiah, but in a keen-witted nation can not have wanted for defenders." *Cheyne.*

23. *Which.* R. V., *That. For reward.* R. V., *for bribes.* "'The wicked' and 'the righteous' are here used in their forensic sense: 'He who is in the wrong,' and 'He who is in the right.'" *Skinner.* "They acquit the guilty, because he can not resist a bribe, and the innocent they rob of his innocence, condemn in spite of his innocence; also, of course, for a consideration." *Mitchell.* See Prov. 17. 15.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

12. *They regard not the work of Jehovah.* Pleasure-loving people forget God, His counsels, His work. Their love of drink and dissipation blinds their eyes, dulls their ears, so that they have no quiet moment to recollect their Maker. These verses are exactly true nowadays of many. They never have time to reflect, they enslave themselves to drink and a passion for amusement, till duty, charity, compassion, divine truth have all faded out of their minds. *Edward King.*

12. *Neither have they considered the operation of his hands.*

They spend their days in prosperity,
And in a moment they go down to Sheol.
And they say unto God,—"Depart from us;
For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.
What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" (Job 21. 13–15.)

14. *Therefore Sheol hath opened its mouth without measure.* Imagine some spectral voice saying, The evil under-world rulers expect a thousand more men in by the end of the month. Or, Ere the year closes you will need to redouble your accommodation, for the world gets madder: evil is on the steps of the throne, evil is in the house of beggary, the aristocracy are corrupted through and through, and all the original space leading to Hadean places will be crowded, and men will be hurrying down in thousands, as if urged on by the whip of a cruel destiny; be ready! That is the image of the text. All glory and pomp shall be swallowed up. There is a spirit of doom in the universe. *Joseph Parker, The People's Bible.*

16. *Jehovah of hosts is exalted in justice.* The point of Isaiah's teaching against which opposition was directed was, of course, its main point, that God was about to abandon Judah. This must have appeared to the popular religion of the day as the rankest heresy. To the Jews the honor of Jehovah was bound up with the inviolability of Jerusalem and the prosperity of Judah. But Isaiah knew Jehovah to be infinitely more concerned for the purity of His people than for their prosperity. He had seen the Lord exalted in righteousness above those national and earthly interests, with which vulgar men exclusively identified His will. Did the people appeal to the long time Jehovah had graciously led them for proof that He would not abandon them now? To Isaiah that gracious leading was for righteousness' sake, and that God might make His own a holy people. Their history, so full of the favor of the Almighty, did not teach Isaiah, as it did the common prophets of the time, the lesson of Israel's political security, but the far different one of their religious

responsibility. To him it only meant what Amos had already put in those startling words, You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities. Now Isaiah delivered this doctrine at a time when it brought him the hostility of men's passions as well as of their opinions. Judah was arming for war. Syria and Ephraim were marching upon her. To threaten his country with ruin in such an hour was to run the risk of suffering from popular fury as a traitor as well as from priestly prejudice as a heretic. The strain of the moment is felt in the strenuousness of the prophecy. Chapter V, with its appendix, exhibits more grasp and method than its predecessors. Its literary form is finished, its feeling clear. There is a tenderness in the beginning of it, an inexorableness in the end and an eagerness all through, which stamp the chapter as Isaiah's final appeal to his countrymen at this period of his career.

The chapter is a noble piece of patriotism — one of the noblest of a race who, although for the greater part of its history without a fatherland, has contributed more brilliantly than perhaps any other to the literature of patriotism, and that simply because, as Isaiah here illustrates, patriotism was to its prophets identical with religious privilege and responsibility. Isaiah carries this to its bitter end. Other patriots have wept to sing their country's woes; Isaiah's burden is his people's guilt. To others an invasion of their fatherland by its enemies has been the motive to rouse by song or speech their countrymen to repel it. Isaiah also hears the tramp of the invader; but to him is permitted no ardor of defense, and his message to his countrymen is that they must succumb, for the invasion is irresistible and of the very judgment of God. *George Adam Smith,* in *The Expositor's Bible.*

20. *Woe unto them that put darkness for light.*

Thus to the tyrant Shen, our King, Wan said;
"Alas, alas! Yin's king so great,
Not Heaven, but spirits flush your face so red,
That evil thus you imitate.
You do in all your conduct what is wrong —
Darkness to you the same as light;
Your noisy feasts and revels you prolong,
The day through you is black as night."

A Chinese Author, about 450 B. C.

22–24. At first sight the prophet seems, in this paragraph, to have two distinct classes of persons in mind. This, however, is not the case. The key to the connection is found in Am. 2. 8. There the older prophet describes the sinners at Bethel as drinking "the wine of such as have been fined" at their feasts; in other words, he accuses them of making their judicial offices pay the expenses of their carousals. So here Isaiah arraigns the corrupt, as well as dissolute judges of his time and country. *H. S. Mitchell.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *That rise up early in the morning.* Great banquets were held by the princes and nobles, beginning at an early hour (Eccles. 10. 16) and accompanied by music of an exciting kind (Amos 6. 5, 6) which were continued into the night and terminated in general drunkenness. *George Rawlinson.*

The Hebrews, although wine was one of the staples of their country, and

they used it as commonly as they now use coffee (1 Sam. 16. 20), even overlooking occasional excess in its use (Gen. 43. 34), always condemned the drunkard; and such they regarded any one who indulged in stimulants early in the day. (Ecc. 10. 16.) *H. S. Mitchell.*

22. *To mingle strong drink.* Two kinds of intoxicating liquor seem to have been consumed at the banquets, ordinary grape wine and a much stronger drink, said to have been made of dates, pomegranates, apples, honey, barley, and other ingredients, and known as "strong drink." *George Rawlinson.*

The wine of the Jews of the present day in Jerusalem and Hebron is always spiced, and thereby acquires great power of heating, and passes violently into the blood. *Delitzsch.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During the reigns of Jeroboam II in the Northern Kingdom and Uzziah in the Southern, the boundaries of these two divisions of Israel had been extended to their farthest limits, and wealth and prosperity were everywhere evident. The prophet Isaiah's life followed these reigns. The date of this lesson may be given as 730 B. C. Despite the seeming prosperity, Isaiah realized that the Assyrian Empire was steadily growing westward and would encroach upon the land of the Israelites, and that evil forces were at work in Israel itself which would inevitably work their own ruin.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When a missionary visited a noted drunkard and tried to persuade him to give up his drinking, the man said he could not, it was too late for him to reform. Then he took a coil of rope and wound it round and round his boy who was sitting in a chair, over and under the chair itself, till the boy was securely fastened. "Can that boy get away?" his father asked, and the missionary answered, "He can not." "Well," continued the drunkard, "I am fast bound hand and foot in sin like that boy is with the rope. I can not get away."

Probably this man had never read the words of Isaiah in our lesson, but he could not have given a better picture to represent it than he did. Isaiah says, "Woe unto them that draw sin as it were with a cart rope," woe unto the man bound hand and foot in sin just as that boy was bound with a cart rope. The sin of this father is the one Isaiah is especially talking about.

For Older Pupils. In the first part of this chapter of Isaiah which we study to-day, the prophet gives a parable of the vineyard: the vineyard was on a very fruitful hill, the husbandman had gathered out the stones, dug it well, and planted the choicest vine, but instead of the choice grapes which he expected would repay his care, only wild grapes were produced. Then Isaiah asks the people what more could have been done to the vineyard; the answer is very evident, the fault was not in the husbandman, but in the vine. Therefore the fences shall be destroyed and the vineyard given over to briers and thorns and ruin. Isaiah then explains his parable: the husbandman is Jehovah, the vine, the men of Judah; Jehovah had labored to make the people bring forth the fruits of justice and righteousness, but they had disappointed Him.

Having declared the general corruption of Judah, Isaiah in the next seven-

teen verses specifies what some of the existing evils are, and pronounces his woes upon them. First comes the greed for land and houses. The rich and powerful have gained large estates by "joining house to house and laying field to field," till there is no room for the peasantry; desolation shall follow. The way in which these people of the leisure upper class spend their time is declared in the 11th and 12th verses, with which our lesson begins.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Presumptuous

The Mighty to drink Wine. Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them! Thus Isaiah characterized the presumptuous drinkers of his day. These were the men who regarded not the work of Jehovah, neither did they consider the operation of His hands. They believed not in the retribution that was coming upon them, and though they were drawing iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart rope, yet they derided Isaiah for his words of warning.

They might see the growing power of the Assyrians, the way in which that mighty empire was absorbing one nation after another, and they might admit the possibility of Judah's falling some day into her hands; but it could not happen in their day; so sure were they of this that they mocked God, saying, "Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see it!"

Has not this been the condition at one time in the down-hill course of almost every inebriate? He presumed in his own strength, he heeded not the warnings, and he scoffed at those who uttered them. One glass now and then could not hurt any one, he would not drink to excess, of course not. "'How do these people know that one glass will not hurt any one?" questions Mr. Edward W. Bok. "One drop of kerosene has been known to throw into flame an almost hopeless fire, and one glass of liquor may fan into flame a smoldering spark hidden away where we never thought it existed. The spark may be there and it may not be. Why take the risk? Liquor will never do a healthy boy or young man the least particle of good."

Alexander the Great has been called "the conqueror of the world." He was a king who was a brave and brilliant and successful soldier; in the space of thirteen years he made himself master of ten nations. He was very sure of himself, but he could not master his appetite for drink, and he died the death of a drunkard while comparatively a young man. "Here is this hero," said Seneca, "invincible by all the toils of prodigious marches, by all the danger of sieges and combats, by the most violent extremes of heat and cold, here he lies, conquered by his intemperance."

One night a gay party of ladies and gentlemen drove from the theater to the station-house to see there what one of them promised would be "a glimpse of real tragedy, more dramatic than anything they would find on the stage." There were the usual number of drunken men, hardened women, and a few young boys and girls at the station waiting to be locked up for the night. One of the ladies, very rich and handsome, to whose breath the odor of champagne clung, stopped with fascinated eyes before an indescribably wretched and drunken old woman. She dropped a gold piece into the drunkard's outstretched

hand, and said as if to herself, "I wonder who will give me a gold piece when I sit where you do now." The policeman who told the story says that for the brief moment she had seen the downward path she was treading, and her prophetic vision had been only too true. Excessive drinking does not seem possible among girls in cultured homes, and yet there are many such presumptuous ones who think they can stop drinking when they wish, and drunkenness in such homes is said to be increasing.

They are swallowed up of Wine. This is how all debasement continues, aggravates itself, and brings itself to shameful issue. No man begins at the point of being swallowed up in any evil; he approaches it almost stealthily, he touches it experimentally, he retains for a certain time his self-control in relation to it,—he will handle it, but easily, so that he can set it down again, should it so please him. But at the end there is swallowing up, destruction—death is in the cup. *Joseph Parker.*

II The Perverse

The Perverse Men of Judah. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! The people of Isaiah's day, despite his warnings, shut their eyes to the truth. Their land was prosperous, their wealth was accumulating, they called it good; but their prosperity was at the expense of the poor peasants, their wealth was leading them to riotous living, and Isaiah rightly called it evil: they were drawing iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart rope; their works were of the nature of darkness, but they were putting this darkness for light, and deeds of justice and righteousness were to them darkness: they were mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; this bitterness was to them sweet; the counsel of the Holy One of Israel which they mockingly derided was to them bitter. They were utterly perverse; they were turned the wrong way, as the Latin word, from which our word *perverse* is derived, literally means, they willed to turn away from the right to the wrong.

The Effect of Calling Evil Good. Because words influence thoughts, and the habit of calling evil things good dulls the conscience, those who at first seek to deceive themselves may at the last actually succeed in doing so. Those who turn themselves the wrong way may find it most difficult to turn themselves the right way. This tendency to call things by wrong words, to confuse moral distinctions, is a very subtle one, and it is a tendency that grows with rapid bounds. Many a man who fails to succeed says that "fate" was against him, "ill-luck" followed him, when perhaps if he spoke of "consequences" instead of "fate," and acknowledged to himself that his failure was the result of his own laziness or carelessness or some other fault, he might yet retrieve his "ill-luck." Said President Hadley of Yale: "Nine-tenths of the temptations of college life would be avoided if we called things by their right names. We should never call things fun here that are rowdyism at home. Compliance with custom, cheating and having a good time, would be designated by big names that we should be ashamed even to think of at home." Said another college professor to his students, "Have you been doing your studying in a way that you know is not right? Then call it by the right name. Don't call it 'ponying,' and don't call it anything else but its right name,—lying, living a lie."

Saying evil is good, does not make it good. When cholera was raging on the Ganges, a medical commissioner gave a leading Brahmin a microscope and showed him the cholera germs in the water. The Brahmin said he could easily kill the microbes, but he did not propose to take steps to purify the water, his remedy was to seize the microscope and dash it to pieces on the stones. Just as wise are the perverse who shut their eyes to the microbes of sin by saying that they are not dangerous, they really do not exist at all, for the toper only has a little weakness, the bad fellow who lives a riotous life is a good fellow, a hail-fellow-well-met, the crimes of trade are only the tricks of trade and graft is not bribery, it is only one of the customs of business.

III The Self-conceited

In their Own Eyes. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight, cries Isaiah, and his warning is needed in our day. "In their own eyes," "In their own sight," these words give the only point of view of a multitude, and very rarely does their point of view agree with that of those who know them.

Did you ever hear of Martin F. Tupper, who wrote a book entitled *Proverbial Philosophy?* The book was very popular when it was first issued, and many good stories have been told of the author's consequent self-appreciation. Once on the deck of a steamer he met an acquaintance who was very famous, and greeted him with the remark, "I perceive, sir, that I am not the only distinguished man on board." Soon afterwards he started for the cabin, and on his way handed his umbrella to a young woman, a perfect stranger, and asked her to take care of it for him. "Young lady," he said solemnly, "You will now be able to say, in after life, that you have held the umbrella of Martin Tupper."

An Analogy. Some of you, I am sure, have read *Alice in Wonderland,* and you remember what happened to Alice when she ate the piece of cake marked "Eat me." She found herself growing taller, taller, until at length everything looked quite small beneath her. Now Pride does for us all what the wonderful cake did for Alice. He puffs us up; he makes us very high and very great in our own sight. *George Milligan.*

A Comparison. I was on a steamer when a passenger shot a sea-bird that looked like an eagle; but when its feathers were stripped off it looked like a humming-bird that had been caught in the rain. That's a conceited man, all fuss and feathers, and not much else. *E. P. Brown.*

Self-Conceit versus Self-Respect. Self-conceit must not be confounded with self-respect. The self-conceited man is contented with himself, he is wise in his own eyes, he has nothing more to learn; the self-respecting man recognizes whatever gift of talent or opportunity God may have given him, and determines to make the most of it, but he realizes that he has much more to learn. Self-conceit overestimates; self-respect rightly estimates. Self-conceit looks down on others; self-respect looks up to self. Self-conceit is proud; self-respect is humble. No one should be self-conceited; every one should be self-respectful.

SENTENCE SERMONS

The blind and cowardly spirit of evil is forever telling you that evil things

are pardonable, and you shall not die for them, and that good things are impossible, and you need not live for them; and if you believe these things, you will find some day, to your cost, that they are untrue. *Ruskin.*

Shutting the eyes to the danger signal does not clear the track. *Chicago Tribune.*

Sin as a caterpillar is bad enough, but sin as a butterfly is a thousand times worse. *David Gregg.*

We may shake our fist at the growing thunder cloud, but it will not disappear. *E. Johnson.*

Every transgression is like an iron plate thrown into the air; gravity will pull it back upon the wrongdoer's head to wound him. *Newell Dwight Hillis.*

UP! — God has formed thee with a wiser view,
Not to be led in chains, but to subdue!
Calls thee to cope with enemies; and first
Points out a conflict with thyself — the worst! *Cowper.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;
Let them not have dominion over me. Psa. 19. 13.

My people are foolish, they know me not; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. Jer. 4. 22.

It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, it is not for Kings to drink wine;
Nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink?
Lest they drink, and forget the law,
And pervert the justice due to any that is afflicted. Prov. 31. 4, 5.

Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart,
And lean not upon thine own understanding:
In all thy ways acknowledge him,
And he will direct thy paths.
Be not wise in thine own eyes;
Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil. Prov. 3. 5–7.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

This is a very dark picture that Isaiah draws of the men of his time, who are so given up to iniquity that they harness themselves to it, draw it upon themselves with cords of falsehood, and then as it were with a huge cart rope. I will ask for strength to be kept from sin, to be spared the knowledge of the pull of sin.

If I think less of what I am, and more of what I might have been, I shall never be guilty of self-conceit.

In the pride and strength of his own self-confidence, Peter declared that he would lay down his life for Christ, and then weakly denied that he had ever known Him; when later he was overcome with self-distrust and self-hatred, he became in truth the rock on which the church was built. When he was self-centered he was vanquished; when he was Christ-centered he prevailed. I must not be wise in my own eyes, but I must seek wisdom from on high.

Am I in the habit of thinking of my own faults as failings rather than sin?

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

Do I minimize the wrong I do by calling such deeds by the least harsh sounding names?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The prophet Isaiah denounces the men of his time who are so thoroughly under the control of strong drink that they even rise up early in the morning to drink, and continue drinking late into the night "till wine inflame them," excites them to madness. The instruments of music that had been dedicated to the worship of Jehovah they use to increase their reveling. They are so enslaved by drinking that they give no heed to God nor His warnings. What shall be their fate? Already their destruction is clearly outlined in the prophet's vision. They realize not their danger, but they shall be taken captive, rich and poor alike shall suffer from hunger and thirst; they shall perish in such numbers that the abode of the dead will have to be extended in order to receive them. The mean man shall be brought down, the lofty shall be humbled, but God in His righteousness and justice shall be exalted. Where now their drunken revelries are held, lambs shall graze on the grass-covered ruins of their deserted land.

Woe to all evil-doers, exclaims Isaiah, to those who are at first attracted to sin as with a small cord and then are drawn as with a strong rope; woe to those that scoff and challenge God to fulfil His righteous judgments; woe to those that call evil good and good evil, darkness light and light darkness, bitterness sweet and sweetness bitter; woe to those that are self-conceited; woe to those that are so drunken with wine that they pervert justice and take bribes.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Bribery. Every man has his price except the man who is worth buying. "Where is the root of the political treason of bribery? Is it to be found in the man who is bribed, or the man who offers the bribe? In the court of conscience are we to discharge as guiltless the editor of the reform journal who offers fifteen dollars to a politician to refrain from arresting him at an inconvenient hour, and hold the Tammany Hall politician who accepts the fee for not performing his duty?

2. The harm that is done by calling good things evil, light things dark, sweet things bitter.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the account of the removal of the ark given in chapters 13, 15, and 16 of 1 Chron. 2. On what former occasion had the ark been put on a new cart? (1 Sam. 6. 7–16.) 3. What were the directions for moving the ark given in Num. 4. 5, 15? 4. What act of irreverence at Beth-shemesh and its punishment is recorded in 1 Sam. 6. 19? 5. Why was the ark at Kiriath-jearim? (1 Sam. 6. 19–7. 1.) 6. What did the ark contain? (Deut. 10. 5.) 7. What was Uzzah's sin? 8. What reason can you give for his death? 9. Where was the ark first put in Jerusalem? (2 Sam. 6. 17.) 10. What did Solomon do with it? (2 Chron. 6. 10.) 11. Commit to memory a portion of David's Psalm of Thanksgiving. (1Chron. 16. 8–36).

FOURTH QUARTER

LESSON I — OCTOBER 4

DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

II Sam. 6. (Read I Chron. 13; 15; 16.) Commit v. 12.

Golden Text

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Psa. 100. 4.

LESSON TEXT Sam. 6. 1–12

1 Again, David gathered together all the chosen *men* of Israel, thirty thousand.

2 And David arose, and went with all the people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth *between* the cherubim.

3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*.

7 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for *his error;* and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

9 And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?

10 So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

11 And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the Lord blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

12 And it was told king David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Again, David gathered.* R. V., *And David again gathered.* A preceding gathering by David is narrated in 5. 17–25. Compare the more detailed account of this gathering of the people to bring the ark to Jerusalem in I Chron. 13. 1–5.

2. *Baale of Judah.* R. V., *Baale-judah. To Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim* 1 Chron 13. 6. In Josh. 15. 9 Baalah is said to be the same as Kiriath-jearim. The journey of David and his hosts to Baale-judah is omitted. *Whose*

name . . . cherubims. R. V., *Which is called by the Name, even the name of Jehovah of hosts that sitteth above the cherubim. Dwelleth.* R. V., margin, *is enthroned.* The ark is called after the name of Jehovah, who is thought of as especially dwelling above it.

3. *In Gibeah.* R. V., *in the hill.* The word *Gibeah* means *hill.* See 1 Sam. 6. 7 and 7. 1.

4. *At Gibeah.* R. V., *in the hill. Accompanying.* R. V., *with.*

5. *On.* R. V., *with. Even on harps.* R. V., *and with harps. Cornets.* R. V., *castanets.* "The harp and psaltery were stringed instruments, the exact form of which is unknown; the timbrel, also called the tabret, was a tambourine or hand drum. The cornet was some kind of instrument which was played by being shaken, perhaps similar to the sistrum of the Egyptians, which consisted of rings hung loosely on iron rods, so as to make a tinkling sound when shaken. Cymbals were plates of metal; held in each hand, and played by being clashed together." *Kirkpatrick.*

6. *Nachon's threshing floor.* R. V., *the threshing-floor of Nachon. The oxen shook it.* R. V., *the oxen stumbled.* See Num. 4. 15.

7. *Error.* R. V., margin, *rashness.* Compare 1 Sam. 6. 19.

8. *The Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah.* R. V., *Jehovah had broken forth upon Uzzah.* "Literally, *had broken a breach,* such as gives a city into the hands of the enemy." *Smith. The name of the place.* R. V., *that place. Perez-uzzah.* R. V., margin, *The breach of Uzzah.*

9. *And said.* R. V., *and he said.*

10. *The Gittite.* Probably this means Gathite, a native of Gath-rimmon in the tribe of Manasseh or Dan.

11. *Continued.* R. V., *remained. Household.* R. V., *House.*

12. *So David.* R. V., *And David. With gladness.* R. V., *with joy.* Compare the account in 1 Chron. 15.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS.

12. *David brought the ark into the city of David.* Thenceforth it never left Jerusalem till it was either destroyed in the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, or carried away to Babylon, or according to Jewish tradition, safely hidden by Jeremiah. For a short time it made Jerusalem as sacred as Gibeon, until, in the reign of Solomon, the old tabernacle was removed from Gibeon altogether, and stowed away in one of the chambers of the temple. *F. W. Farrar.*

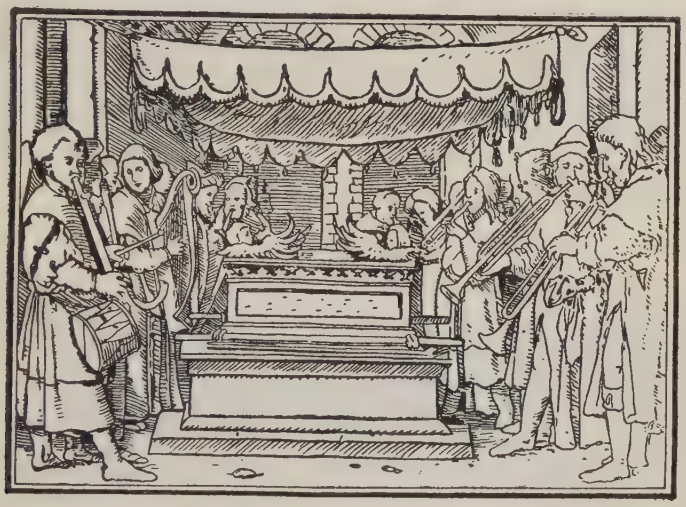
12. *David brought up the ark with joy.* The gladness and triumph, the awe, and the memories of victory which clustered round the dread symbol of the presence of the Lord of Hosts, are wonderfully expressed in the choral twenty-fourth Psalm. Probably we may gain the key to its form by supposing it to be a processional hymn, of which the first half was to be sung during the ascent to the city of David, and the second while standing before the gates. We have, then, to fancy the long line of worshippers climbing the rocky, steep hillside to the ancient fortress, the Levites bearing the ark, and the glad multitude streaming along behind them.

First there swells forth from all the singers the triumphant proclamation of God's universal sovereignty, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. For He hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods." When the symbol of His presence is to

have a local habitation in the center of the national life, the psalmist lays for the foundation of his song the great truth, that the divine presence is concentrated in Israel, but not confined there, and concentrated in order that it may be diffused.

Then, as they climb, a single voice perhaps chants the solemn question, "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in the place of His holiness?"

And the full-toned answer portrays the men who shall dwell with God, in words which begin, indeed, with stringent demands for absolute purity, but wonderfully change in tone as they advance, into gracious assurances, and the clearest vision that the moral nature which fits for God's presence is God's gift. "The clean handed, and pure hearted, who has not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully;" there is the eternal law which nothing can ever alter,



Holbein's Representation of the Ark of the Covenant

that to abide with God a man must be like God — the law of the new covenant as of the old, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." But this requirement, impossible of fulfilment, is not all. If it were, the climbing procession might stop. But up and up they rise, and once again the song bursts forth in deeper and more hopeful words, "He shall receive the blessings from Jehovah, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Then that righteousness, which he who honestly attempts to comply with such requirements will soon find that he does not possess, is to be received from above, not elaborated from within; is a gift of God, not a product of man's toils. God will make us pure, that we may dwell with Him. The righteousness which fits for dwelling with God the last words of the answer proclaim is given on the simple condition of seeking Him.

And now the procession has reached the front of the ancient city on the hill, and stands before the very walls and weather beaten gates which Melchizedek may have passed through, and which had been barred against Israel till David's might had burst them. National triumph and glad worship are wonderfully blended in the summons which rings from the lips of the Levites without;

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye doors (that have been from of old)," as if even their towering portals were too low, "and the King of glory shall come in."

Then, with wonderful dramatic force, a single voice from within the barred gates asks, like some suspicious warder, "Who, then, is the King of glory?" With what a shout of proud confidence and triumphant memories of a hundred fields comes, ready and full, the crash of many voices in answer, "Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle!" How vividly the reluctance of an antagonistic world to yield to Israel and Israel's King, is represented in the repetition of the question in a form slightly more expressive of ignorance and doubt, in answer to the reiterated summons, "Who is He, the King of glory?" With what deepened intensity of triumph there peals, hoarse and deep, the choral shout, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory." That name which sets Him forth as sovereign of the personal and impersonal forces of the universe — angels and stars, and terrestrial creatures, all gathered in ordered ranks, embattled for His service — was a comparatively new name in Israel, and brought with it thoughts of irresistible might in earth and Heaven. It crashes like a catapult against the ancient gates; and at that proclamation of the omnipotent name of the God which dwells with men, they grate back on their brazen hinges, and the ark of the Lord enters its rest. *Alexnder Maclaren, The Life of David.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Which is called by the Name.* By the Jews the Hebrew name for Jehovah was regarded as too sacred to be pronounced, and in their later writings "the Name" stands for Jehovah.

14. *David danced before Jehovah.* Dancing was performed at first on sacred occasions only. It was a part of the religious ceremonies of the Egyptians as well as of the Hebrews. Among the Hebrews it was joined with sacred song, and was usually participated in by the women only. When the men danced it was in company separate from the women, promiscuous dancing not being practised. Dancing was an outward expression of tumultuous joy. *Freeman.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"If David's successfully conducted war of deliverance against the Philistines was the first jewel that he set in his newly acquired royal crown, Jerusalem, now the royal city of David, was the second." The fortress of Jebus is henceforth known as "the city of David," or as Jerusalem. On the Tell-el-Amarna tablets it is called Uru-Salim, and it is therefore thought that the Israelites restored to it an ancient name. David strengthened his capital by building a new wall (1 Chron. 11. 7–9), and erected for himself a palace of stone and cedar. To make it the national center of his kingdom, it must also possess a national sanctuary, and become the center of the worship of God. At this time the tabernacle was in one city, the ark in another, and both were neglected. The tabernacle had long been in Shiloh, but perhaps for a part of the time it was at Nob. The ark was at Kiriath-jearim. There were two high priests, Abiathar, the sole survivor of Saul's massacre of the priests at Nob, who had joined David when he was in the cave of Adullam; and Zadok at Shiloh, who

had been with Saul and with Ish-bosheth before David was made king of all Israel. David retained both high priests, had a temporary tent prepared at Jerusalem for the reception of the ark, until he could carry out his cherished purpose of erecting a temple for its abode, and then summoned the people for a great religious procession to bring the ark to the capital from Kiriath-jearim (Baale-judah), twelve miles away on the border between Judah and Benjamin.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Before the ark could be brought to Jerusalem David must have been firmly settled on his throne. It is impossible to determine the chronological order of the events of David's reign, but certainly his defensive and offensive wars with the Philistines must have first taken place, and probably his wars of conquest as well, before there came a time of rest in which he could turn his attention to his capital and to the ark. Many scholars place the events of chapters 10, 11, 12, and 8 before those of chapters 6, 7 and 9. As soon as the Philistines learned that David from being a petty chieftain, whose power they did not fear, had become king of all the Israelites, they "went out against him," captured Bethlehem, and forced David to take refuge in the cave of Adullam. After various encounters the Israelites finally succeeded in driving the Philistines back to their coast cities; near Gibeon the Philistines were so thoroughly routed that we never again hear of their troubling the Israelites.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Ten years ago a group of islands far out in the Pacific Ocean became a part of the United States. Who can tell me the name of the Islands? On the island of Hawaii there is one of the largest volcanoes in the world, called Kilauea (Keē-laă-ŏŏā-aă). When this volcano first burst forth, and a stream of red-hot lava ran down its sides, the natives were terribly frightened. They said there was a demon in the mountain, and they would not look towards it, but covered their faces and fell down praying to it for mercy. After a while they grew accustomed to it, and no longer feared it, but they continued to worship it. Now they speak of it contemptuously, and call it "Old Niggerhead."

Do you remember in our lessons last year how often the ark of God was mentioned, and how it was always treated with greatest reverence? In the life of the Israelites in the wilderness, whenever they moved from one camp to another the ark always led the way: when they crossed over the Jordan to take possession of Canaan the priests with the ark first entered the river and then stood still while all the people passed. How did Joshua have the place marked where the ark had been held? When the warriors marched around Jericho the ark was carried at the head of the procession. The ark was to these people the sacred symbol of the presence of God with them. But now for many years it has been neglected by the people, and has been left in the house of Abinadab. From boyhood his grandsons and great grandsons had seen it, and just as the native people of Hawaii lost their fear of their volcano, so they had lost all fear of the ark. Perhaps they have thought of it only as a piece of furniture, a chest, and have lost their sense of its sacredness.

One day a great company of people came to the place where they lived. What

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

had they come for? Whose plan was it to take the ark to Jerusalem? Why?

For Older Pupils. A noted English preacher has a sermon with a striking title, Technical Training in the Spiritual Life. Is not the whole Old Testament history an account of the technical training in the spiritual life of the Israelites?

There are many incidents recorded, among them our lesson to-day about Uzzah, where a sin or an error seems punished with greater severity than in our eyes is just, and yet each punishment was a lesson to the people, and formed a part of their training in spiritual life. Last year we read about Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron who "offered strange fire before the Lord," and were stricken with death, and Moses said to Aaron, "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified." Now we have come to that point in the history of the Israelites where the sacred symbol of God, the ark of the Lord, which has so long been neglected, is to be restored to its former glory, and the death of Uzzah taught the people that God is "a consuming fire" who will not sanction any violation of His holiness and majesty. Christ taught the same lesson when He drove the money changers from the court of the temple in Jerusalem.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Uzzah's Sin

Uzzah's Spirit. Uzzah's sudden death after putting his hand upon the ark to keep it from falling from the cart when the oxen stumbled, whether from natural or supernatural causes, was considered by the people as the direct punishment of God for his impiety. Other hands must have touched the ark in putting it upon the cart, why did not they, too, perish? The entire procedure was contrary to the law laid down in the 4th chapter of Numbers in regard to the moving of the ark. After the priests had covered it, it was to be carried by "the sons of Kohath," but "they shall not touch the sanctuary, lest they die." Evidently in the time of David the ceremonial observances were not rigorously kept. Why, then, was Uzzah punished?

"The heart's aye the part aye
That makes us right or wrang."

As in the case of Cain and Abel we must infer that Abel's sacrifice was offered in the right spirit while Cain's was not, and therefore the one was accepted and the other rejected, so we must infer that it was the careless, irreverent spirit in which Uzzah touched the ark that deserved punishment, while the others handled it with reverent regard. Reverence is treating worthy things in a worthy manner. Uzzah had lost the feeling that the ark was worthy of being treated worthily.

The Result of Familiarity. There is a tradition among the peasants in Little Russia that the Archangel Michael descended from Heaven at the time of the spring planting and abode among them so as to teach them the way to Heaven. They dared not look at him, so awe-inspiring was his presence. By the time the corn began to grow they became accustomed to him, but obeyed him humbly. When the corn was in blossom they had ceased to obey him, and when it had ripened they drove him off with stones.

The Youth's Companion gives this legend, and thus comments: "What if

once a year a book were opened, the one book in the world that could show us authoritatively how to make the best of life, and that drew aside the veil beyond death? Would not men everywhere crowd to hear the oracle? Such a book may be found unheeded and unopened in many a house.

What if we could pray to God but once in our lives? Think of the petitions, the half-desperate hope, the fear, the agony, crowded into that one petition. We can speak to Him at any moment, and often forget to do it at all.

There are chances, possibilities and forces which come into all of our lives, more powerful than any archangel, but they are matters of course to us, and we give them little or no heed."

II Obed-edom's Courage.

Jehovah blessed Obed-edom. Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, made herself famous for all time by a single deed, the anointing of Christ shortly before His arrest and crucifixion. She cared not what Judas and the disciples might say of her "wastefulness"; she thought only of showing her love for Christ, and Christ said to the disciples, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

There is a moral hero of the Old Testament who has attained fame by a single deed. He would never have been heard of had he not had the courage to receive into his home the ark of God, after Uzzah had perished by its side, and its presence was so greatly feared that even David the king would not have it brought to Jerusalem. Perhaps it was given into his care because he was a foreigner, and if it occasioned his death it was thought that it would not so much matter!

A European monarch feared assassination, and hired a "double," a man of his own height and build and appearance, to represent him. He was mistaken for the ruler and was shot. Another candidate offered himself for the position, and met the same fate. After this no one could be found willing to accept the position. The ark of God had been borne into battle during the life of Eli and had been captured by the Philistines. Grievous afflictions befell the people of every city to which it was taken, and the Philistines, in terror, put it on a new cart and sent it to the Israelites at Beth-shemesh. The men of Beth-shemesh irreverently looked into the ark, contrary to the law. Great numbers of the people perished, and their death was regarded as a direct punishment from God. Now Uzzah has been smitten. Is there any one willing to accept a position seemingly as dangerous as to become a double of an emperor? Obed-edom braves the danger, keeps the sacred chest in his own home three months, and "Jehovah blessed Obed-edom, and all his house."

Another Obed-edom. In 1896 Lieutenant-Colonel Picquart was put at the head of the Intelligence Bureau of the War Department of France and directed to close up the Dreyfus case. He believed Dreyfus guilty of the charge against him, and began his work of filing away the papers in regard to him, when he unexpectedly discovered evidence that convinced him Dreyfus was innocent and that Esterhazy had written the damaging documents. He reported his discovery to his superiors, and was directed to keep silent. "It is not you who are on the *Ile du Diable*," they told him. But he had the courage of his convictions, and avowed that he could not go to his grave with this secret. He

was sent to Africa on a dangerous mission, a false charge was made against him and he was degraded and put into prison. Knowing that he suffered all this because of his determination to free an innocent man and expose a guilty one, he nevertheless remained steadfast in his purpose. When the case of Dreyfus was finally brought up again and he was exhonorated, this great moral hero, too, was released from his prison. A weak man would have feared the consequences, and said that, after all, it was no affair of his, why should he suffer in so dangerous a business.

III Enter into His Courts with Praise

A Joyful Occasion. As one reads the account of the removal of the ark to Jerusalem, especially as it is narrated in 1st Chronicles, he is impressed with the exceeding joyousness of the occasion. Not only does David dance and shout for joy, but "all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah with shouting," "lifting up their voices with joy."

The Perfection of Praise. The song of the Christian congregation should be like the ringing of the anthem into the air by the bells in the tower of Antwerp cathedral. In the shower of bell-notes that falls from the vast spire of the cathedral are all kinds of notes. There are the deep notes of the great bells which make the anthem roll through the atmosphere with the intonations of the thunder. But besides these great, sonorous tones, there are the notes of the little bells pealing out the very same anthem on a higher key. There are notes which are fine and sweet, notes as small as a bird's warble. They fill the air with crisp tinklings, which are as distinct as the louder notes of the great bells. All have their individuality, and all are needed to make perfect the anthem which enchants the listener. In the great Christian Church Christ wants to hear the song of redemption sung by the mature and deep voices of men and women, but He wants to hear at the same time the higher-keyed voices of the boys and girls.

When Christ was on earth He accepted the hosannas of the children who sang at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Pharisees sought to stop them, but He said it was the perfection of praise. This was the highest encomium He ever passed upon any worship of earth. The skilled musician hears every instrument in the great orchestra, and delights in each and feels a thrill from each. No instrument can be absent or silent without being missed. *David Gregg.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Praise and thanksgiving lift the soul upward. *David Swing.*

The Christian life that is joyless is a discredit to God and a disgrace to itself. *M. D. Babcock.*

There is no day that does not bring me something to enjoy, and the greatest thing of all — faith in God — keeps my heart light and my face joyful. *Goethe's Mother.*

Praise ye the Lord,
Sing praises all ye nations,
Let every heart and voice
Sing praise unto His name. *D. A. French.*

We need to look up to God; it is our salvation, our necessity. *Hastings.*

The man who stands straightest in the presence of sin bows lowest in the presence of God. *F. B. Meyer.*

I thank Thee, Father of the Universe, that Thou hast filled me with rapture over the works of Thy hand. *Kepler.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam. 2. 30.

They have made no distinction between the holy and the common. Ezek. 22. 26.

Rejoice in Jehovah, O ye righteous:
Praise is comely for the upright. Psa. 33. 1.

Let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire. Heb. 2. 28, 29.

Jehovah, I love the habitation of thy house,
And the place where thy glory dwelleth. Psa. 26. 8.

When he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; then to the place which Jehovah your God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you;. . . . and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God. Deut. 12. 10–12.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

In early days a church was called the "Meeting-house," the place, not where man meets man, but where man meets God. "The Lord is in His holy temple;" let us meet Him reverently.

We ought to "enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise," not because God needs our praise, not because He asks it, nor yet because we have been taught to praise Him and we think it fitting and right, but because our own hearts need the effect of our praises and thanksgiving, that our gratitude and love towards our heavenly Father may grow in depth and sincerity.

"There is little hope for an irreverent fellow. It is hard to get hold of him. There is so little in him to get hold of," wisely remarks Bishop Vincent. Am I guilty of irreverence in any way, of treating holy things as if common, of profaning the Sabbath, of speaking jestingly of the Bible, of taking God's name in vain?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

A great procession of chosen men of Israel with King David at its head went to Kiriath-jearim (Baale-judah) for the ark of God (which was called by the Name of Jehovah of hosts, who was thought of as enthroned above the cherubim, the two figures on top of the chest or ark). The ark was placed on a new cart, and the oxen were driven by Uzzah and Ahio, of the family of Abinadab in whose charge it had long been left. Joyously the procession moved along its way to Jerusalem, David exulting with the rest and keeping time to the music of harps and psalteries, timbrels and castanets and cymbals. But their joy was suddenly turned to sorrow and fear, for when the oxen stumbled,

and Uzzah put his hand to the ark to steady it, "God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." This sudden death vindicated before the people the sacredness of God, and taught the duty of reverential care of the ark, His sacred symbol. David called the place Perez-uzzah, the Breach of Uzzah, "because Jehovah had broken forth upon Uzzah." Angry at himself, probably, for his failure to have the ark borne by priests (1 Chron. 15. 2, 13), afraid to have it taken farther, disappointed and chagrined at such an unhappy ending to his triumphal procession, David was "displeased" the record says, and had the ark carried aside to the house of Obed-edom. There it remained three months, and Obed-edom and all his house were blessed by its presence.

Another and successful attempt was then made to bring the ark into the city of David. "This time the ark was carried on the shoulders of the Levites," says Dean Stanley. "Every arrangement was made for the music, under the Levite musicians. Obed-edom still ministered to the ark which he had guarded. According to the Chronicles, the priests in their splendid dresses, the two rival tribes of the south, Judah and Benjamin, the two war-like tribes of the North, Zebulum and Naphthali, were conspicuous in the procession. David himself was dressed in the white linen mantle of the priestly order; and, as in the prophetic schools where he had been brought up — and as still in the colleges of Eastern Dervishes — a wild dance formed part of the solemnity. Into this, the king threw himself with unusual enthusiasm: his heavy royal robe was thrown aside; the light linen ephod appeared to the bystanders hardly more than the slight dress of the Eastern dancers. He himself had a harp in his hand, with which he accompanied the dance. The women came out to welcome him and his sacred charge, as was the custom on returning from victory. The trumpets pealed loud and long, as if they were entering a captured city; the shout as of victorious hosts rang through the valleys of Hinnom and of the Kidron, and as they wound up the steep ascent which led to the fortress. Now at last the long wanderings of the ark were over."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Motives and Methods.

2. "It is the man who understands the spirit of his age and his nation, and is able to come forward promptly and energetically in compliance with it, that makes history. David perceived that the spirit of his people and its vocation demanded a close connection between national life and religious life."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the parallel account in 2 Sam. 7. 2. What argument does Haggai give for rebuilding the temple, similar to that of David for building it? (Hag. 1. 3.) 3. What do we know about Nathan the prophet? See the Subject Index of your Bible. 4. Was David's purpose to build a temple approved by God? (1 Kings 8. 18.) 5. What reason does 1 Chron. 17 give for his not being allowed to carry it out? 6. What reason is given in 1 Kings 5. 3; 1 Chron. 22. 8; 28. 3? 7. What preparations did David make for the building? (1 Chron. 29. 2–5.) 8. Read David's words to God after Nathan's announcement to him, as recorded in 1 Chron. 17. 16–27. What virtues does he show in these words?

LESSON II — OCTOBER 11

GOD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

I Chron. 17. (Read II Sam. 7; Psa. 89.) Commit vv. 13, 14.

Golden Text

There hath not failed one word of all his good promise. I Kings 8. 56.

LESSON TEXT I Chronicles 17. 1–14

1 Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord *remaineth* under curtains.

2 Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that *is* in thine heart; for God *is* with thee.

3 And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying,

4 Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in:

5 For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another*.

6 Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me a house of cedars?

7 Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, *even* from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel:

8 And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that *are* in the earth.

9 Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning.

10 And since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee, that the Lord will build thee a house.

11 And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go *to be* with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.

12 He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne forever.

13 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* that was before thee:

14 But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *As David sat in his house.* R. V., *when David dwelt in his house. An house of cedars.* R. V., *a house of cedar. Remaineth.* R. V., *dwelleth. Under curtains.* In a tent of cloth made from goat's hair. Compare Haggai's argument for rebuilding the temple, in the fourth verse of the first chapter of Haggai.

2. *Then.* R. V., *and. All that is in thine heart.* All that thou purposeth or desirest to do.

4. *Thou shalt not build me a temple.* Compare the reason given in 1 Kings 5. 3.

5. *I have not dwelt in a house.* The ark was housed in "the temple of Jehovah" at Shiloh (1 Sam. 3. 3), which was provided with doors (3. 15), but the covering may have been "the tent of meeting." *The day that I brought up Israel.* Out of Egypt.

6. *Wheresoever.* R. V., *In all places wherein. To any.* R. V., *with any. To feed.* R. V., *to be shepherd of.*

7. *Sheepcote.* R. V., margin *pasture. Even from.* R. V., *from. Ruler.* R. V., *prince.*

8. *Walked.* R. V., *gone. And have . . . men.* R. V., *I will make thee a name, like unto the name of the great ones.*

9. *Also I will ordain.* R. V., *and I will appoint. And they . . . more.* R. V., *that they may dwell in their place, and be moved no more.* "The troubulous times of the Judges shall recur no more, and Israel shall abide in peaceful and permanent possession of the land of promise. Evidently this was written before the exile." *New Century Bible. The Beginning.* R. V., *the first.*

10. *And since the time that.* R. V., *and as from the day that. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies: furthermore I tell thee.* R. V., *And I will subdue all thine enemies moreover I tell thee. The Lord will build thee a house.* His posterity shall be established permanently as the royal house of Israel; his rule shall not end with himself as in the case of Saul. "House" is a figure of speech for family, descendants.

11. *Be expired.* R. V., *are fulfilled. Go to be with thy fathers.* The usual Old Testament expression for death. *Raise up.* R. V., *set up. Which.* R. V., *who.*

12. *I will establish his throne forever.* Through his greater Son, Jesus.

13. *Mercy.* R. V., *lovingkindness.* 11 Sam. 7. 14 adds: *If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. Him that was before thee.* Saul.

14. *For evermore.* R. V., *for ever.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

3. *Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in.* What we know not now, we shall know hereafter. Years after David said to Solomon, his son, not born at this time, "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, thou hast shed blood abundantly, and made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name." (1 Chron. 12. 8.) The blood-stained hand might not raise the temple of peace. It would have wounded David needlessly to have been told this at the time. It was enough to wrap the divine "no" in a promise of infinite blessing; but as the years passed the reason for the divine refusal grew clear and distinct before him. Meanwhile David possessed his soul in patience and said to himself, "God has a reason: I can not understand it, but I know it is well."

Some day we shall understand that God has a reason in every No which He speaks through the slow movement of life. He would reveal it to us if we

could hear it; but it is better not to pry into the mystery of His providence. He fences our questions saying, "If I will that he tarry, what is that to thee?" But the time will come, probably in this life — certainly in the next — when the word of the Lord will come to us; and from the eminence of the years we shall descry why He led us as He did. *F. B. Meyer, David.*

14. *His throne shall be established forever.* The prophecy of the Messiah enters upon a new stage, bearing a relation, as its successive stages always unmistakably did, to the history which supplies a framework for it. Now for the first time can He be set forth as the king of Israel; now the width of the promise which had at first embraced the seed of the woman, and then had been narrowed to the seed of Abraham, and thereafter probably to the tribe of Judah, is still further defined as to be fulfilled in the line of the house of David; now the personal Messiah Himself begins to be discerned through the words which are to have a preparatory fulfillment, in itself prophetic, in the collective Davidic monarchy whose very office is itself a prophecy. Many echoes of this new message ring through the later psalms of the king. His own dominion, his conquests, and his office gradually become to him a solemn prophecy of a mysterious descendant who should be really and fully all that he was in shadow and in part. *Alexander Maclaren, The Life of David.*

If we consider, too, how David's dynasty really came to an end as a reigning family some five hundred years after, we see that the language addressed to him was not exhausted by the fortunes of his family. In the divine mind the prophecy reached forward to the time of Christ, and only in Christ was it fully verified. God's words implied, that it was in his line the promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled — "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." *W. G. Blaikie.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.* To appreciate the value of this promise for the future, we must have in mind the great insecurity of new dynasties in Eastern countries and the fearful tragedies that were often perpetrated to get rid of the old king's family, and prepare the way for some ambitious and unscrupulous usurper. We hardly need to recall the tragic end of Saul, the base murder of Ish-bosheth or the painful deaths of Asahel and Abner. We have but to think of what happened in the sister kingdom of the ten tribes, from the death of its first king, Jeroboam, on to its final extinction. What an awful record the history of that kingdom presents of conspiracies, murders and massacres! *W. G. Blaikie.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

When the ark was first brought to Jerusalem it was placed in a tabernacle prepared for it, which probably resembled the one used in the wilderness. It may have been his friendship formed with Hiram of Tyre that led David to think about beautifying his capital. Hiram furnished the materials and the workmen, artificers in brass and wood and stone, who built David's stately palace. Having a palace for himself, David next purposed building a national sanctuary at Jerusalem, "beautiful in elevation, the city of the great King."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After conquering the Philistines, David turned his attention to subduing, one by one, the foes that encircled his kingdom — the Moabites, Edomites, Amalekites, Ammonites, and the Arameans of Zobah farther north — till he held sway from Philistia and Phenicia on the seacoast to the Arabian desert on the east, and from the Red Sea on the south to the Lebanons on the north, and even the people beyond Mount Hermon and about Damascus paid tribute to him. See the full page map.

David's life as king of Israel naturally divides into three periods: first, a period of war and conquest, second, a period of peace and prosperity; third, a period of domestic troubles. While the time of lessons 1, 2, and 3 of this quarter may not be determined, it is natural to assume that they occurred during the second period. If, as has been conjectured, fourteen years were spent in warfare, the date of this lesson may be placed about 988 B. C.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Have you ever heard of Miss Helen Gould, who is very wealthy and who does so much good with her money? She says that "Wealth is a trust and not to be used for one's personal pleasure alone, but for the welfare of others." This was the thought of David as he sat in his new and beautiful home. He felt that it was not right for him to use the abundant means at his command for his own comfort and pleasure alone, he wished to use it for the benefit of the people, and above all, for the honor and glory of God. He had exchanged a house for a palace, but the ark of God was still kept in a tent just as in the early times when all the people dwelt in tents.

For Older Pupils. When David was fleeing from Saul, the prophet of God said to him in Moab, "Abide not in the stronghold; depart and get thee into the land of Judah." Then David departed, the record says, and came into the forest of Hereth. After the death of Saul, David inquired of Jehovah, "Whither shall I go?" And He said, "Unto Hebron;" and David went up thither. When Nathan rebuked him for his sin, the king humbly acknowledged his guilt.—"I have sinned against Jehovah." In the reception of messages from God sent through a prophet, David presents a strong contrast to Saul. Saul received unwillingly both messages and rebukes. "I will have my own way," was Saul's governing principle, while "I delight to do thy will, O my God," was David's. Let us see how he received the prophet Nathan's message which forbade the carrying out of a long cherished wish.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Spending for Self and giving to God

What determines the Value of our Giving. Lo, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of Jehovah dwelleth under curtains. There should not be such disparity, David thinks, between his manner of living and the manner in which the ark, God's symbol, was housed. Is not this the underlying principle of all right giving, that there should be no such disparity be-

tween what we lavish on ourselves and what we give to God? Jesus sat over against the treasury and watched the givers, and perceived that the widow who cast in her two mites gave more than all the rest, for she gave all that she had. It is not the amount that we give, but the amount that we have left, which determines the generosity of our giving.

When John Wesley's income was thirty pounds, he lived on twenty-eight and gave two, says his biographer; and when his income increased to sixty pounds, and afterwards to one hundred and twenty, he still lived on twenty-eight pounds and gave the remainder.

The Russian writer Tourgenief says in one of his works: "If a man praises the rich Rothschild in my presence, who from his enormous income gives thousands for the education of poor children, for the hospitals for the sick, for the care of old people — I am touched and I praise him. But while I praise him, there comes involuntarily into my mind the thought of a poor Russian peasant's family who took a poor orphan into their wretched hut. 'We will take Käthe,' said the wife, 'even though it costs us our last groschen; we shall not even have salt with which to salt our soup.' 'Well then,' replied the peasant, her husband, 'we will eat it without salt.' Up to this peasant Rothschild does not reach."

Some Men who could not afford to give. A man who attempted to raise some money on a subscription paper for a necessary church out West relates his experience thus:

"The first man I met said he was very sorry, but the fact was, he was so involved in his business that he couldn't give anything. Very sorry, but a man in debt as he was owed his first duty to his creditors. He was smoking an expensive cigar, and before I left his store he bought of a peddler who came in a pair of expensive Rocky Mountain cuff-buttons.

"The next man I went to was a young clerk in a banking establishment. He read the paper over, acknowledged that the church was needed, but said he was owing for his board, was badly in debt, and did not see how he could give anything. That afternoon, as I went by the base-ball grounds, I saw this young man pay fifty cents at the entrance to go in, and saw him mount the grand stand where special seats were sold for a quarter of a dollar.

"The third man to whom I presented the paper was a farmer living near the town. He also was sorry, but times were hard, his crops had been a partial failure, the mortgage on his farm was a heavy load, the interest was coming due, and he really could not see his way clear to give to the church, although it was just what the new town needed. A week from that time I saw that same farmer drive into town with his entire family, and go to the circus, afternoon and night, at an expense of at least four dollars.

"The Bible says, 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' but it says also, 'By their fruits ye shall know them!' And I really could not help thinking that the devil could use that old excuse, 'in debt' to splendid advantage, especially when he had a selfish man to help him." *The Youth's Companion.*

Give to God a Definite Portion of what you have. Do not we use the bulk of our money for ourselves, giving to God and His work the chance coins which we may be able to spare, or the subscriptions which we are obliged to give, to maintain a character amongst our fellows?

Determine beneath the eye of Christ how much you should legitimately spend on yourself. None of us can determine this for another. It must be settled

calmly under the Master's eye, always remembering that we have no right to presume on windfalls or miracles; or to go beyond our income; or to risk running into debt. But when once we have prayerfully ascertained our position, we should maintain it, unless we have very clear tokens that we are to exchange it for another. Give away a stated proportion of all you own or earn. We remember so vividly the amount we give away that it bulks up largely and we imagine that we are generous, until we see in figures how small a proportion our charity bears to our income. To guard against this, it is well always to put aside a certain part for the Lord before we begin to divide up the rest, so that His share may be as safe as our rent. It is not within my province to say what proportion of our income we should statedly set apart for God. The patriarchs gave a tenth; and surely the noon of Christianity should not inspire less benevolence than the twilight. *F. B. Meyer.*

II Thou didst well that it was in thy Heart

Attempted Things. In his address to the people after the placing of the ark in the temple which he had built, Solomon said: "Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. But Jehovah said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thy heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart; nevertheless thou shalt not build the house." (1 Kings 8. 17–19.) Thou didst well that it was in thy heart. "Good but wished with God is done." David was not permitted to build the temple, but his sincere desire to honor God was counted to him for righteousness as much as if he had carried out his purpose. Is not this a comforting thought for every one of us?

"It is well to know that attempted things,
Are counted and crowned by the King of Kings."

Unfulfilled Desire and Unsuccessful Effort. How many of these there are even in honest and earnest lives! Yet the desire and the effort count. That is the lesson for us. The Lord accepts and honors them, that is a comfort. Spiritual and mental scheming, planning, dreaming, or castle-building are not the things which God accepts. Plans and schemes count for little. It was not what was in David's mind, but only what was in his heart, which God accepted and commended. We are so often prevented from doing what we had set our hearts upon doing that it is a blessed comfort to know that our Father considers our hearts more than our hands. We can not all of us bear the pleasure and the pride of success. Defeats are less dangerous and are sometimes better, holier, and higher than successes. As Lowell says, "Not failure, but low aim, is crime." We are hampered and hindered and prevented as to what our hearts impel us to do. We do so little compared to what we mean to do. In reading the life of M. Angelo, the one thing which impressed me most was the largeness of his desires and plans compared with his actual accomplishments. There were so many things in his great heart which never got into buildings, marbles, or frescoes. It has been so with all great lives. Browning says, "What hand and brain were ever paired?" and we might say, What heart and hand were ever paired? Let us take comfort in the thought that God knows our hearts and counts our desires as more and better than our deeds. *Thomas S. Hastings, Union Seminary Addresses.*

Lessons from Browning and Carlyle. Browning is the thinker above

all others who earnestly preaches that purpose is more than accomplishment.

"What stops my despair?
This! 'tis not that man Does which exalts,
But what man Would do!"

And again he says:

"The beginning shall suffice;
The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life."

This is his philosophy both in the realm of action and in the realm of being:

"Aspire, break bounds. I say,
Endeavor to be good, and better still,
And best. Success is naught, endeavor's all."

How different is Carlyle's message! "The very sound of my voice," he says of himself, "has something savage — prophetic: I am as a John the Baptist girt about with a leather girdle, whose food is locusts and wild honey." "Know what thou canst work at, and work at it like a Hercules!" is his counsel. He has no patience with those who work at it and fail. "Every noble work is at first 'Impossible,'" he declares. Difficulties of course will come: "All work of man is as the swimmer's: a waste ocean threatens to devour him; if he front it not bravely, it will keep its word." Every one must struggle and must succeed like Columbus, whom he thus addresses: "Brave Sea-captain, Norse Sea-king, Columbus, my hero, royalest sea-king of all! it is no friendly environment, this of thine, in the waste deep waters; around thee mutinous, discouraged souls, behind thee, disgrace and ruin, before thee the equal, unpenetrated veil of night. Patiently thou wilt wait till the mad south-wester spreads itself, saving thyself by dexterous science of defence, the while: valiantly, with swift decision, wilt thou strike in, when the favorable East, the Possible, springs up. Mutiny of men thou wilt sternly repress; weakness, despondency, thou wilt cheerily encourage; thou wilt swallow down complaint, unreason, weariness, weakness of others and thyself. Thou shalt be a great man." 'Tis Carlyle's trumpet-call that we must not weakly wish, but what we aspire to be, we must be; he judges man by what he actually accomplishes, not by what he aspires to accomplish.

We need both Browning's and Carlyle's philosophy of life: Browning's to comfort and encourage us, to make us judge ourselves and others somewhat as God judges; Carlyle's to prevent our mistaking a feeble wish for a real purpose, a possibility for an impossibility, and to stimulate us to be and to do all we may become and accomplish.

III Compensations

The Greater Blessing. Nowhere does David appear to better advantage than in his acceptance of God's refusal. He has offered to honor God by building Him a temple. It was a plan on which he had set his heart, a plan so good that, at first thought, it seemed good to the prophet Nathan. "Do all that is in thy heart, for God is with thee," Nathan told him, but Nathan's next word to him is, "Thus saith Jehovah, Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in." Any one who has long cherished a plan that seems fraught only with good for others, and then has had his plan thwarted, knows something of the bitterness of his disappointment, and all the keener is the disappointment when he has first been encouraged to believe that God is with him in his purpose. David

did not rebel. "He went in and sat before Jehovàh," and talked with Him as a child would talk to his earthly father. He believed in God's wisdom, and goodness, and promises. His prayer was full of gratitude to God for His past goodness to him, and of exultant faith in His promises of greater kindnesses yet to be granted him. Solomon, his son, in dedicating the temple which he built, could say: "There hath not failed one word of His good promise;" David in renouncing his wish to build the temple, could say: "Thou, O Jehovah, hast blessed, and it (his house) is blessed forever."

"Somehow God makes up to us." Coupled with the refusal of a temple building three promises were made to him by Jehovah through the prophet Nathan. The temple should be built by one of his family. "What matters I or they, mine or another's day," seems to have been David's thought; the temple should be built, and that was satisfaction enough for David, who was bent, not on his own aggrandizement, but on the honoring of God. Though he should not build a house for the Lord, the Lord would build him a house, and that house should reign forever. As we read these words, we realize that there is only One whose kingdom is without end, Christ Jesus. How much greater, farther reaching, more wonderful were the blessings granted than the blessings asked for! "God refuses his immediate request only to grant to him far above all that he was able to ask or think," says Dr. Blaikie. "And how often does God do so! How often, when His people are worrying and perplexing themselves about their prayers not being answered, is God answering them in a far richer way! Glimpses of this we see occasionally, but the full revelation of it remains for the future. Oh for the faith that does not make haste, but waits patiently for the Lord — waits for the explanation that shall come in the end, at the revelation of Jesus Christ!"

God's Compensations. When did God take anything from a man, without giving him manifold more in return? Suppose that the return had not been made immediately manifest, what then? Is to-day the limit of God's working time? Has He no provinces beyond this little world? Does the door of the grave open upon nothing but infinite darkness and eternal silence? Yet, even confining the judgment within the hour of this life, it is true that God never touches the heart with a trial without intending to bring in upon it some grander gift, some tenderer benediction. *Joseph Parker, People's Bible.*

Look for the Compensations in Life. Robert Chambers, in *Orchard Land,* puts these words into the mouth of a blind bat:

"Can you hear the rustle of a small moth creeping over the goldenrod across the brook? I can. I hear the almost soundless step of a tiger-spider on the stone wall. I hear, deep in the earth, the stirring of a tiny grub, eating soft, juicy roots. I hear, high in that apple tree, the gentle breathing of a sleeping robin on his nest. I have one sense that is entirely denied to indoor folk — the sense of the nearness of things. I can fly like a flash through thickets of leaves so dense that scarcely any light penetrates, and I never touch a leaf or a stem. It is not touch nor smell that prevents my tearing my thin fragile wings against the briars of thorny thickets. It is an extra sense, the sense of nearness, for blind bats can dart through bramble thickets as easily as bats who have eyes."

May we not be as serenely content, adds the *Homiletic Review,* as this little blind animal with the advantages that are ours? Instead of enjoying the sense that guides him through the thicket, how easily he might spend his life, as some human beings do, repining that he has not as many eyes as the spider!

SENTENCE SERMONS

If naught but purpose in thy power,
Thy purpose firm is equal to the deed. *Young.*

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. *Abraham Lincoln.*

What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me. *Browning.*

There is no happiness in having and getting, but only in giving: half the world is on the wrong scent in the pursuit of happiness. *Henry Drummond.*

There lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed. *Wordsworth.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase Proverbs 3. 9.

The tithe is the Lord's. Leviticus 27. 30.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Luke 1. 32, 33.

O Jehovah our God, all this stone that we have prepared to build thee a house for thy holy name cometh of thy hand, and is all thine own. 1 Chron. 29. 16.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Am I like David, concerned about God's house? Am I as eager to spend for God as for myself?

The denial of the desire of our heart may bring with it a great spiritual blessing. "Does God withhold the less and not give the greater?" asks Dr. B. F. Meyer. "Does He refuse the offer we make, and not bestow some heavenly gift that enriches forever more? Dare to trust Him; let His assurances comfort thee."

"I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God," said David when, an old man, he resigned the kingship into Solomon's hands. He was not allowed to build the temple, but he gathered the materials which Solomon used in building it. It may not be for me to accomplish a great work for God, but it is my duty to do what God lets me do and not grieve because it is not greater.

Others shall sing my song,
Others shall right the wrong,
Finish what I begin,
And all I fail of win.
What matters I or they,
Mine or another's day,
So the right word be said,
And life the sweeter made. *Whittier.*

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

When David was at peace with his enemies he began to consider what next he should do for his kingdom. To Nathan the prophet he told the plan he had probably long cherished. He himself was dwelling in a house of cedar, he said to Nathan, but the ark of God was housed in a tabernacle. David's plan to build a temple for the ark seemed to Nathan at first a good one, and he told the king to do all that was in his heart, for God was with him. But after Nathan had thought over the situation and had received divine instruction, he came to David with a different message. It was not God's will that David should build Him a house. "I have gone from one tabernacle to another ever since I brought up Israel out of Egypt," was God's message to Nathan, "and did I ever command the judges to build me a house of cedar? There is therefore no haste now for a house which has been so long deferred." Another reason given in 1 Chron. 22. 8 is that it was not fitting that the temple should be built by David because he was a man of war. Yet other reasons may have been that the affairs of the kingdom were not yet sufficiently settled to permit David to devote the necessary energy to building a temple (1 Kings 5. 3) and that it would require all the time and resources at David's command merely to collect materials for the temple.

Nathan's special message to David from the Lord contained a reminder of God's presence with him from his life as a shepherd till he became king and conquered his enemies, and an assurance that He would continue to be with him, and would make his name one of the greatest ones in the earth, and that He would be with his people Israel, subduing their enemies and giving them peace. The crowning promise of all, the heart of the whole message, was that David should be the founder of a permanent dynasty, a descendant of his should build the temple, whose throne should be established forever, a promise that was fulfilled in Christ, whose reign is from everlasting to everlasting.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Messianic prophecies.
2. Systematic giving.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review all that you have learned about the friendship of David and Jonathan. 2. What special promise did David make to Jonathan in regard to his family? (1 Sam. 20. 13–16.) 3. What promise did Saul ask from him? (1 Sam. 24. 20–22.) 4. How old was Mephibosheth at his father's death? (2 Sam. 4. 4.) 5. What caused his lameness? (2 Sam. 4. 4.) 6. What instances were recorded in our last year's lessons of God's blessing some one for some one else's sake? (Gen. 19. 29; 30. 27; 39. 5.) 7. Of what was Mephibosheth afraid? 8. What does 1 Kings 15. 29 and 16. 11 show was sometimes the oriental custom in regard to a predecessor's household? 9. Read Christ's description of the Last Judgment, Matthew 25. 31–46. How does He there teach that one may repay the kindnesses of God? 10. Commit to memory Matthew 25. 40.

LESSON III — OCTOBER 18

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO JONATHAN'S SON

II Sam. 9. (Read II Sam. 16. 1–4; 19. 24–30.) Commit v. 7.

Golden Text

And be ye kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another. Eph. 4. 32

LESSON TEXT II Samuel 9

1 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

2 And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name *was* Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant *is he.*

3 And the king said, *Is* there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son *which is* lame on *his* feet.

4 And the king said unto him, Where *is* he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I *am?*

9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits,* that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king,* he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name *was* Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth.

13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table, and was lame on both his feet.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *For Jonathan's sake.* See David's covenant with Jonathan in 1 Sam. 20. 14–17 and 42.

2. *And when . . . the king.* R. V., *and . . . and the king.*

3. *The kindness of God.* See the expression in 2 Sam. 20. 14. "The kindness and mercy such as God shows to men, unfailing, unsought, unlimited. Compare Luke 6. 36." *Kirkpatrick. Lame of his feet.* See Sam. 4. 4.

4. *Machir, the son of Ammiel.* "A prominent member of the Manassite clan of the same name (Num. 26. 29) settled east of the Jordan." *Kennedy.* Later, when Absalom's rebellion caused David to flee from Jerusalem, Machir welcomed him, 2 Sam. 17. 27–29.

6. *Now when Mephibosheth was come.* R. V., *And Mephibosheth came.* In 1 Chron. 8. 33 and 9. 40 Mephibosheth is called Merib-baal. "Merib-baal," the Lord contends, or more properly Meri-baal, "the Lord's hero." *Kennedy.* *Reverence.* R. V., *obeisance.*

7. *All the land of Saul.* His private property. *Saul thy father.* Saul was his grandfather. The words *father* and *son* are often used in the sense of ancestor and descendant. *Eat bread at my table.* A common mark of honor in oriental countries. See 1 Kings 2. 7; 2 Kings 25. 29."

8. *He bowed himself.* R. V., *he did obeisance. Such a dead dog.* This expresses most abject humility.

9. *Thy master's son.* As he is first called "Saul's servant," *son* is probably used here for grandson, though Jonathan, too, may have been his master.

10. *Thou therefore.* R. V., *and thou. Food.* R. V., *bread. That thy master's son may have bread to eat: but Mephibosheth shall eat bread alway at my table.* Although treated as a member of the royal household himself, Mephibosheth would need the revenue from his father's estates to support his household.

11. *Hath commanded.* R. V., *commandeth. Said the king.* It seems preferable to omit these words (the italics show that they are not found in the original) and let Ziba make this remark, as in the margin of the R. V. (But Mephibosheth eateth, etc.) Thus the king's repetition is avoided.

12. *Micha.* R. V., *Mica.* "Verses twelve and thirteen seem to be an appendix, giving further information as to the life of Saul." *Smith.*

13. *And was lame on both his feet.* R. V., *and he was lame in both his feet.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1. *Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul?* It is a useful habit, at certain times, especially for those whom Providence has blessed, to cast over in their minds from time to time the state of their obligations, and endeavor to ascertain whether there be not some persons who have a claim on their kindness. There are other debts than money debts which it becomes us to look after. In youth, perhaps we received some kindness from friends and relations, which at that time we could not repay; twenty or thirty years may have made a great difference in our respective positions; those from whom we received kindness may be in need, while we may be in comfortable circumstances; and yet, unless we deliberately consider from time to time how matters stand, the subject may slip from our thoughts. We are sadly apt to forget these early obligations; but that very forgetfulness gives a world of pain to those to whom we owe them. It is not always hard-heartedness that makes young persons in the prime of life forgetful of the comfort of infirm and aged parents or other near relations; it is often pure thoughtlessness. It is with debts of kindness as with other debts: we are all more ready to remember what is owing to us, than what is owing by us. And our kindness need not be limited to those who have a positive claim. If ye be kind to those who have been kind to you, what reward have you? The Bible rule is, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men." *William Garden Blaikie.*

1. *That I may show him a kindness for Jonathan's sake.* Do you remind me that David is now a king, the leader of a conquering army, the creator of a literature which stands unique in the literature of all time? But back of David's throne lie the hills of Bethlehem; back of the great general stands a shepherd lad, and back of the singer of the Eighth Psalm is a devout youth watching God's stars on the plains by night. And was it not way back there that God gave him his noblest friendship? Poor, friendless, unknown, Jonathan's love made him rich, Jonathan's friendship made him strong, Jonathan's devotion made him well known! In his palace the king was saying to himself, I have my earthly treasure, I have my army, I have my kingdom; but what are all these compared with my soul's unpaid debt of love and gratitude to Jonathan? The friend of my youth is dead now, and I am an old man; but oh, I wonder if there is yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" *Frederick F. Shannon.*

7. *I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake.* Godly parents are a blessed inheritance for their children. Parents who were loved in their day by their fellows are something to be grateful for by those who come after them. No matter how much of a man a man is in himself, he has an added treasure, in time of need, when he meets those to whom his father was dear. When Solomon, in all his glory, wanted help from Hiram, king of Tyre, in building a temple for Jehovah at Jerusalem, he secured that help on account of his father; for it is said that "Hiram was ever a lover of David." Many a man since that day has found how good it is to be the son of a man whom God loved, and was loved of God's children. This is a truth to be borne in mind in counting up our blessings. In serving God and in winning men's love our parents were laying up treasure for us to enjoy. *Sunday School Times.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

6. *Mephibosheth fell on his face and did obeisance.* It seems to have been common to show different degrees of respect to different persons according to their rank and importance, by bending the body in a greater or less measure. Simply to bow down the head, was an expression of mere common civility; to curve the body low down, signified a considerable degree of reverence; to throw it entirely down, with the face upon the ground, was an act of the greatest homage. *Nevin, Biblical Antiquities.*

7. *David said unto him, "Fear not."* Evidently David felt the need of reassuring Mephibosheth that his life was in no danger, that he had not brought him from his retreat in Lo-debar to put him to death as a survivor of Saul and therefore a possible rival to his throne. It very frequently happened in Eastern countries (and happens still) that a founder of a new dynasty put to death all possible "Pretenders" belonging to the previous reigning house. In chapter 21 of 2 Samuel we are told that David spared Mephibosheth, but had seven others of Saul's descendants put to death at Gibeah, to avenge the Gibeonites who had suffered at the hands of Saul. When Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal, succeeded in having himself made king at Shechem in the days of the Judges, he put to death all his brethren save Jotham whom he could not find (Judges 9. 1–6). The history of the northern kingdom contains accounts of many murders of kinsmen of rivals.

8. *A dead dog.* The strongest devisable hyperbole in Eastern lands of un-

worthiness and degradation; for in a dead dog the vileness of a corpse is added to the vileness of a dog. *Kitto.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Lo-debar, where Ish-bosheth was living, was across the Jordan, probably not far from Mahanaim where his uncle, Ishbaal, had his court while king of the northern tribes. The scene of the lesson is at David's palace in Jerusalem.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On the day after the battle on Mount Gilboa (lesson 10 of third quarter), news was brought to the royal family of the death of Saul and Jonathan, the victory of the Philistines, and their approach upon Gibeah. A nurse seized Mephibosheth, the five year old son of Jonathan, in her arms and started to flee from the place, but in her excitement she let the lad fall. He was picked up a helpless cripple, both feet being injured, and was taken across the Jordan. For many years he lived in the house of Machir in Lo-debar. At the time of this lesson he has a son named Mica (verse 12). If David remembered his debt to Jonathan soon after his accession to the throne of all Israel, this statement must have been added here "in anticipation;" if the event of to-day's lesson occurred after David's wars of conquest, then Ish-bosheth would have been old enough to have a son at this time.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In one of Walter Scott's stories there is an account of a Scottish family that have been very prosperous, but their farmhouse is burned and everything on the farm is stolen, and they find themselves without a roof to shelter them and without money to build anew. While they are wondering what they will do, news is brought of trouble that has come to a distant kinsman, and at once the grandmother says, "Poor man! Can we no' send him something?" When she is reminded that they have nothing to send, she says, "It's sae natural to think on one's relatives before one's self." What a happy world this would be if it was natural for everybody to think of others before himself!

David had a kindly heart, but for a while after he became king he had so much to do for his people that there seemed to be no opportunity to pay the debts of kindness he himself owed. When the chance came, his thoughts turned to the member of Saul's family who had been such a true friend to him. Who was he? Why could he not show kindness to him? In what way only could David repay Jonathan's kindness?

For Older Pupils. "We are coming to see," says the President of Brown University, "that the fittest to survive are not those with the strongest beak, and tongue, and claw, but those with greatest power to serve their fellows. We have come to see that the invalid in the sick chamber may render greater service than the stout mechanic; that not the bread-winner, but the love awakener, is most needed in our strenuous civilization." This is a different interpretation of the "the fittest" from that held in the pagan world; there the sick or maimed are left to die or even deliberately killed, and the strong man

or tribe exterminates the weak one, just as among the lower animals the stronger devours the weaker. "We that are strong enough ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," says Paul, and he is teaching the doctrine of the Gospels, where gleams on almost every page Christ's pity for the weak, His love for the ignorant or unfortunate or lost.

In the Old Testament we have glimpses of the truth that superior advantages imply superior responsibilities, from the time that Moses espoused the cause of the Israelite slaves in Egypt onward, but in our lesson to-day we have the first instance in the Old Testament of a man rich in power and influence, stooping to lift up a poor, crippled brother and treating him as one of his own household.

Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul, is lame in both his feet, and a poor, weak specimen of humanity withal; how Saul would have scorned him, what a bitter thought it would have been to him had he known that brave Jonathan would perish and leave only this misshapen weakling to represent his house!

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Be ye kind One to Another

Kindness a Fixed Purpose, not a Chance Thought. *Kind* and *kin* come from the same Anglo-Saxon word. There is relationship in the moral as well as in the physical world; there is kinship in kindness. If God is our Father then we are all brothers, and should show by our kindness to one another that we are akin to Him. What makes more for the happiness of daily life, and sometimes even for the ability to endure life at all, than the spirit of kindness? What greater regret have the majority of people than the unkindnesses done, and the kindness not done, to others?

If you have read Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' story, *Walled In,* you will recall the powerful picture she there draws of the college professor who is so bravely trying to bear his invalidism, whose sick-room is made a place of torture by his petty, self-centered wife who fails to show him even the commonest kindnesses.

"I want it said of me by those who know me best," said Abraham Lincoln, "that I have always plucked a thistle and planted a flower wherever a flower would grow." What a royally kindly man was he! The spirit of kindness is a fixed purpose, not a chance occurrence and a sometimes. He who has the spirit will find a way of showing it. He will not say, in a helpless sort of way, "Isn't there something I can do to help you?" and on having received the customary "There's nothing you can do, thank you!" answer, rest content that he has shown a readiness to do a kindness. He will find a way or make it.

Not your Mood, but Another's Need. The kind man does not say merely what he feels like saying; that would be adaptation to his own moods, and only self-love. He says what he thinks another needs to hear. Kindness relates you not to your own mood, but to the mood of the other man. To say a pleasant thing because you feel pleasant may be an accidental kindness, for it may meet another's need, but, though good, it is not highly virtuous. Genuine kindness oftenest comes from self-repression,—a cheerful message from a sad soul, a brave word from a trembling heart, a generous gift from a slender purse, a helping hand from a tired man. It is not your mood, but the other man's need, that determines kindness. *M. D. Babcock, Thoughts for Everyday.*

What is the Special Power of Kindness? It abolishes a world of pain, and brings into the vacant place a world of joy. There is so much irremediable suffering in the world. There are so many bodily ills that can not be cured or even alleviated, so many mental troubles that can not be remedied or even mitigated, so many sorrows that can not be done away or even sweetened. That world of woe must be rolled back upon the heart of God. It is His problem, and we can not doubt that He will meet it to the supreme satisfaction of every reasonable soul.

There is a world of pain that need not be; a world born of sour looks, ungracious speech, unmanly acts, a world that harrows the hearts of millions. Kindness wipes that vast and dismal world out of existence.

What is the trouble with our family life? Unkindness. What is the bane of business life? Unkindness. The shame of our social life? Unkindness.

Kindness is like the sun. Its absence means a frost, a killing frost; it means blight and gloom; it means a world of pain that need not be, imposed upon a world of pain that must be. Every thing that Midas touched became gold. Everything that the kind man touches becomes bright with tender and shining humanity. *George A. Gordon, Through Man to God.*

II Passing it Along

How to Repay God's Kindnesses. Jonathan had long been dead, but David had not forgotten his debt to him for his loyal friendship in the most trying years of his life. He can not pay the debt to Jonathan, but he can and will pay it to Jonathan's son.

"Have you had a kindness shown?
Pass it on;
'Twas not given for thee alone,
Pass it on."

"Seek to cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindnesses of God in your daily life," says Dr. Maclaren. How shall we repay these kindnesses? "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me," said Christ. We may and should give thanks to God in our prayers for all His crowded kindness to us, but we should not be content with this passive gratitude. There is a thankful contentment that is selfish. The blessings that we have received put us under a debt which is rightly paid only when we help those not so fortunate as we are.

We are in danger of thinking that our prayers, our Bible reading, our churchgoing, constitute religious service. We need all these helps, but can we think of God as needing them from us? Can we imagine that we are doing Him a service by them? May we not, however, think of Him as needing our helpfulness to others, and of ourselves as co-partners with Him in distributing His kindnesses? A teacher in a Mission School was talking about faith, and she said to one of her pupils: "If God really loves you, why doesn't He take better care of you? Why doesn't He tell some one to send you a good suit of clothes, or coal enough to keep your home warm?" "I guess He does tell some one, and some one forgets," answered the little fellow. Was he not right? Was he not missing some of the kindnesses that should rightfully be his, because some one forgot to help God?

A Christ Deed. A long story by Alice Louise Lee in a recent paper tells

how a woman who was a cook in a miner's camp passed a kind deed on. She called it her Christ-deed, a kind deed she had done for some one every Easter for twenty years. At the mining camp she told a reckless young man who was her assistant cook how she was led to make this gift. One Easter time her husband had been thrown from his horse on the Kansas prairie, and would have died there with his broken limb had it not been for a family by the name of Hollandbecker who happened to come across him. "They were good to him, as good as can be," she said. "They had to stop and camp out ten days, he was that bad off, and they sent two hundred miles for a doctor. Mis' Hollandbecker let her husband and two young ones shift for themselves mostly while she took care of him. When he came home, I'd saved fifty dollars keeping boarders, so I sent it to her for bein' so good as to save Lem. She sent it right back with that letter. Read it to me again, Joe. I never get tired of it." And Joe read with a husky voice: "It was merely my Christ-deed for Easter day. Will you pass it on in spirit each Easter?"

"You can tell by what she says that they're rich and don't want for anything," said the woman, "But I've never got over wanting to do something nice for her."

When Easter came the assistant cook was missing, and the doer of the Christ-deeds feared that he had gone off with some wild companions, till a miner brought her this message: "Say, Mis' Staples, Joe ain't gone on a booze. He hasn't been home in years,—folks had no idea where he was,—and he struck the home trail yesterday. He said tell you he'd reach his mother to-night. Wanted me to tell you his name is Hollandbecker, and that his mother'd sure think you'd paid back her Christ-deed—whatever that means!"

Some Ways of "Passing it on." Whatever your age, you have some blessing given to you fresh each morning from God. Pass it on.

Is it youth with its strength and lightheartedness? Do not keep it for the ball field. Give your tired mother some of it in a hearty kiss and tender word, or such gentle help as you can render. Do not disdain to brighten the breakfast table with school gossip and jokes. It will cheer your father all day to feel that his boy takes into his young life. Let every one who comes near you be the happier because you are young and happy.

Or, you have a sweet voice and a talent for music? Do not keep them for display, that they may bring you applause. Sing at home, or in church, or beside lonely and neglected children, or wherever your music will carry comfort or peace.

Or, you have studied and read much? Whom does your knowledge help? Do you use it simply for yourself, or to make your little world brighter and better?

You are, perhaps, a professed servant of Christ. You ponder long upon your sins. You read your Bible. You pray morning and night. You go to church. You are intent on saving your soul. But what help do you give to the souls of your brothers? God does not give you the water of life to be thrown upon the ground. Pass it on! *The Youth's Companion.*

III The Gift without the Giver is Bare

He shall eat Bread at my Table. Four times we are told in this chapter that David had Mephibosheth eat bread at the king's table; the emphasis laid

on this fact has in it a lesson for us. David might have been content with restoring to Mephibosheth his father's estates and appointing Ziba and his household as his servants. This would have been showing Mephibosheth abundant kindness, but it would have cost David little, for what were estates to David the King? Something of himself must go with the gift, there must be a personal element in it, in order to be a kindness shown for Jonathan's sake. At a time when stature and physical strength were deemed important attributes of the royal household, there may well have been even some sacrifice in having a cripple always at the king's table. Notwithstanding this, David decreed that the man who was lame in both his feet should eat continually at his table.

A Modern Oriental Table

"It is not written, Blessed is he that feedeth the poor, but he that considereth the poor," Ruskin reminds us. "A little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money." There is a great need in this world that can be met only by the gift of self. Tolstoi tells of his saying to a beggar, "Brother, I have no money," and of the beggar's clasping his hand with joy and saying that he had given him better than money, for he had called him "Brother."

The great English statesman Gladstone was found sitting by the bedside of the poor sick boy whose duty it had been to sweep the street crossing, and reading the Bible to him. A minister in Boston has told about going to see a poor family and being met at the door by Bishop Phillips Brooks with a baby in his arms. He had given the tired mother some street car tickets and sent her off to get the fresh air, and was caring for her baby till she returned. If a man like Bishop Brooks, who could preach such wonderfully helpful sermons, could give of his time to a poor tired woman, shall we say that we have no time for such a gift of ourselves?

The Personal Element in Charity. It is easy to give away money in handfuls, but thought and sympathy and ability are required to give away money wisely. Mr. Jacob A. Riis, whose experience in helping the poor has made him an authority on the right way of giving charity, explains the reason for social settlement work in these words: "The social settlement goes to the home, which is the kernel of all, and tries to help there with neighborly touch. 'My brother' is the word that has healing for all our social ills. The settlement has been compared to a bridge upon which men go over, not down, from the mansion to the tenement; for a bridge must be level to be good. There was a time when men went down to that work, or shot down their coal and their groceries, as if through a coal chute, in contemptuous settlement of brotherhood arrears. That did not work. The crop we raised from that was hatred and helplessness. But the personal touch can redeem even free soup; and if there is anything more hopeless than that I do not know it."

Mr. Riis has narrated many instances showing how the poor give themselves

in helping those still poorer. "One hard winter an Irish engineer, who had a family of four and whose wages were small, sheltered in his tenement (1) a widow with three children, helpless; (2) a mother with two children, husband in hospital, and no good; and (3) the O'Connors from their rear tenement with a raft of their own. The O'Connors were day boarders. The man was out of work, and every day when he went to look for a job, the engineer's folks sent for the family to 'come over and spend the day,'— incidentally, to get fed. At night when Mr. O'Connor came home empty-handed, they watched for him at the window, and got him in to tell of his search and his ill-luck, and while there made him 'sit up' with them to the family meal. For weeks it went on, and never a growl from the engineer. They were not friends; they were neighbors, and 'poorer than he.' He had wages."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Kind hearts are more than coronets. *Tennyson.*

No one is useless in the world who lightens the burden of it for any one else. *Dickens.*

The heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind. *Faber.*

The inward pleasure of imparting pleasure — that is the choicest of all. *Hawthorne.*

Kind hearts are here; yet would the tenderest one
Have limits to its mercy; God has none. *Adelaide A. Proctor.*

The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it? *Benjamin Franklin.*

Blessed are the joymakers. *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

One of the blessed, unending needs of heaven must surely be the need of giving forth into other lives the blessedness which God has poured into mine. *Lucy Larcom.*

It is a good and safe rule to sojourn in every place as if you meant to spend your life there, never omitting an opportunity of doing a kindness or speaking a true word or making a friend. *Ruskin.*

There are many good people who are willing to give alms who are never ready to do almsdeeds; half the beauty and power of Christian charity is in the personality of its administration. *Pentecost.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

The law of kindness is on her tongue. Prov. 31. 26.

The noble deviseth noble things; and in noble things shall he continue. Isa. 32. 8.

With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again. Luke 6. 38.

And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of Jehovah, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. Ruth 2. 20.

Bless Jehovah, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.
Psa. 103. 2, 4.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Am I governed by the spirit of kindliness, or am I only occasionally kind? Do I prove by serving others that I am eager to serve God? Can I be a true follower of Christ and yet fail in regard for the rights and feelings of others? I will follow Charles Kingsley's advice and "make it a rule —— and pray God to help me keep it — never, if possible, to lie down at night without being able to say, 'I have made one human being, at least, a little wiser, a little happier, or a little better this day.'"

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

In a time of peace David's thoughts went back to Jonathan, that noble friend who had stood by him so loyally in his troubles, and to his covenant with him, that he "would not cut off his kindness from his house forever." Is there any one left of the house of Saul? he asked, for he would show him kindness for Jonathan's sake. It was difficult to secure information about Saul's household, but at last Ziba, a former servant of Saul, was brought to David with the information that a crippled son of Jonathan, named Mephibosheth, was living in the house of Machir in Lo-debar, across the Jordan. David sent for Mephibosheth. When the young man arrived he prostrated himself before the king as one did in those days to a superior, and evidently showed by his looks that he feared his being sent for boded ill, for David at once reassured him. "Fear not," he said, and told him he would show him kindness for his father Jonathan's sake, and restore to him Saul's estates, and he should eat at the King's table. All this seemed scarcely credible to Mephibosheth. David then arranged with Ziba that he and his fifteen sons and twenty servants should till Saul's estates and bring their produce to Mephibosheth.

"It is especially interesting to notice that when any blessing or compassion was asked of Jesus, the appeal was made to Him as the Son of David, the proverbial goodness of the shepherd king having evidently awakened the largest anticipations of beneficence in the Shepherd Saviour."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Survival of the Fittest.
2. The way in which 1 Sam. 20. 11–17 and 24. 20–22 prepare the way for the incident of this lesson.
3. Modern philanthropical methods.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read Nathan's rebuke of David in 2 Sam. 11. 1–15. 2. Read Psalm 51. What verse of this Psalm would you chose as a golden text for this lesson? 3. Read Rom. 4. 6–8 for Paul's use of the first two verses. 4. What disciple did Jesus say was without guile? What did he mean? (John 1. 47.) 5. Tell the parable by which Jesus taught that God is ready to forgive one who repents of sin. (Luke 15. 11–32.) 7. Write an outline of the 32d Psalm.

LESSON IV — OCTOBER 25

THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

Psalm 32. (Read Psalm 51; Rom. 4; 5.) Commit vv. 1, 2.

Golden Text

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Psa. 32. 1.

LESSON TEXT Psalm 32

1 Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *whose* sin *is* covered.
2 Blessed *is* the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there* is no guile.
3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.
4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.
5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.
6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.
7 Thou *art* my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.
8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.
9 Be ye not as the horse, *or* as the mule, *which* have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.
10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.
11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Blessed.* "The word in the original is not singular but plural, as if to express the number and variety of the joys which the Psalmist had found — O the happiness of him whose transgression is forgiven!" *van Dyke. Covered.* "So that it becomes invisible to God, the Holy One." *Delitzsch.*

2. *Imputeth not iniquity.* "The iniquity is as though it had not been done." *Delitzsch. No guile.* "Sincerity is with the Psalmist a criterion of goodness; a 'guileless spirit' is equivalent to an upright character. If the set of the will is toward God and His moral law, a man is 'guileless'; if away from God, he is 'treacherous' or 'faithless.'" *Cheyne.*

3. *When I kept silence.* Refused to confess my sin. *Waxed old.* R. V., *wasted away. Roaring.* R. V., *groaning.* Verses 3 and 4 in poetic language describe the torture of an awakened conscience.

4. *Thy hand is heavy upon me.* Remorse, and perhaps sickness, the Psalmist recognizes as God's work upon him. *Is turned into.* R. V., *was changed as with.* "By the inward anguish in the struggle not to confess, his moisture, *i. e.*

the juices of life, was turned (as it were) into the drought of summer." *Perowne.* Compare Prov. 17. 22. *Selah.* Repeat. At the present time in a Jewish service any one in the congregation may call out "Selah," and the last part must be repeated.

5. *Have I not hid.* R. V., *did I not hide.* "The truth must be recognized and faced. The four clauses of this verse describe the process. In the first, 'I began to acknowledge' indicates the action in its incipiency; we see the penitent coming, and hear him begin to speak. The next, 'I did not hide,' describes a completed action. The next, 'I said, I will confess,' takes us back to the inner movement of the spirit which made the confession complete; while the last should be rendered, 'And Thou, Thou didst forgive the iniquity of my sin!'" *Davidson. Selah.* Omitted in R. V.

6. *For this.* Because of this fact, that Thou art a forgiving God. *Shall every one.* R. V., *let every one. In a time when Thou mayest be found. Compare* Isaiah 55. 6. R. V. margin, *in the time of finding out sin. In the floods . . . him.* R. V., *When the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him.* A figure of speech for a time of trouble or of divine judgment. Compare Psa. 18. 16.

7. *Thou shalt.* R. V., *thou wilt. Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* "Thou wilt give me abundant cause, turn where I may, to praise Thee." *Perowne.*

8. *I will guide thee with mine eye.* R. V., *I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.* It is not plain whether God or the Psalmist is the speaker of this verse.

9. *Whose mouth . . . thee.* R. V., *whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in, else they will not come near unto thee.* An exhortation to yield willing, not forced, obedience to God's will, taking verse 8 as the words of God.

10. *Sorrows.* Viewed as punishments. *Mercy.* R. V., *lovingkindness.*

Trappings of an Assyrian Horse

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1 and 2. Though these verses are full of the freshness of natural emotion, they are not carelessly or thoughtlessly constructed. They are most wonderful in the wealth of their meaning and the exactness of their language. Here are three words to describe sin, and three words to describe forgiveness; and each one of them has its own peculiar significance and value, so that the unworthiness of man and the loving-kindness of God are fully exhibited and illuminated on all sides. Sin is *transgression,* an offence against God, a departure from Him, a defection from His covenant. *Sin* is a coming short of the mark, a false step, a wandering from the path of duty. Sin is an *iniquity,* an inward depravity or perversity, a crookedness of the soul which makes it like a bent sword or a deformed tree.

And when God pardons sin, He *forgives* it. He takes it away as a burden is lifted from a weary back. He *covers* it, He hides it out of sight beneath the

mantle of His mercy. He *imputes* it not, blotting it out from His book of accounts like a canceled debt. So far as the relations between God and the sinner are concerned, that sin is destroyed, obliterated, gone forever. *Henry van Dyke, The Story of the Psalms.*

4. *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me.* Under terrors of conscience men have but little rest by night, for the grim thoughts of the day dog them to their chambers and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in the cold sweat of dread. God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down: better a world on the shoulders, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David. *C. H. Spurgeon.*

6. *Surely the great waters shall not reach unto him.* This is an image of security in the midst of danger, of peace in the midst of turmoil, of the center of calm which scientists tell us is hidden at the heart of every cyclone. The man who has sought and found the mercy of God is not removed from the world of sudden floods and tempests, but he is like one whose feet are set upon a great rock which can not be moved or overwhelmed. He sees the waters hurrying past, but he himself stands firm, unshaken and unterrified. His confidence is not in himself, but in God. *Henry van Dyke, The Story of the Psalms.*

10. *He that trusteth in Jehovah, lovingkindness shall compass him about.* When we are one with God, whatever God does, we enjoy, whatever He then does, we are always glad to have done. If it is God's way we like, we can always have that way. But if we want our way, God does not always conform His will to ours. "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good." But not all things work together for good for any one else. *Editorial in Sunday School Times.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Psalm 32. This Psalm, which is the second of the Penitential Psalms, was used in the Jewish Church for the close of the Day of Atonement. On that one day the Jewish Church received the most solemn assurance that God had forgiven the guilt of His people and covered all their sin. God had said: "On that day he (the Priest) shall make atonement for you to cleanse you; from all your transgressions before the Lord ye shall be clean." (Lev. 16. 30.) This assurance of the forgiveness of the sins of the past year was conveyed to the eyes of the assembled worshippers in three ways: (1) by the scapegoat, (2) by the sacrifices, (3) by the High Priest coming forth from the Holy of Holies. If we picture Israel singing Psalm 32 at this supreme moment of realized forgiveness we shall best understand the meaning of the Psalm of the Old Testament and its relation to the Atonement of Christ. *E. G. King.*

5. *I acknowledge my sin unto thee.* The domestic history of David presents a sad contrast to the political. The harem, with its attendant evils, was in part responsible for this. By an aspiring prince like David marriage was regarded as one of the most efficient means of gaining influence and wealth. The temptation to multiply wives was strong. While king at Hebron he had at least six wives, and subsequently added still others to his harem. It is true that, according to the ideas of the Orient, the monarch was privileged to take as his wife any of the daughters of the land; but already the Hebrews had a higher standard, and the rudeness of this age does not palliate the sin of adultery, even in a king. While David's crimes against society were the most

culpable, the greatness and breadth of his character were demonstrated by his repentance. The sight of a conquering monarch humbly confessing his sins was unprecedented. *Charles Foster Kent, History of the Jewish People.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the earlier part of David's rule over all Israel, while the Ammonite war was being waged, occurred David's adultery with Bathsheba and his marriage to her after he had caused the death of Uriah. Nathan the prophet came to David and told him a parable of a rich robber who stole a poor man's only lamb. David declared that such a man was worthy to die, and Nathan then said "Thou art the man." David humbly confessed his guilt.

The heading of Psalm 51 states that it is "A contrite sinner's prayer for pardon, a Psalm of David when Nathan the Prophet came unto him." The heading of Psalm 32 is: "Blessedness of forgiveness and of trust in God. A Psalm of David." It is generally believed that these two Psalms express David's penitence for these sins, and his joy in the pardon received. It has been well said that in the earlier Psalm, the 51st, David is the prodigal saying, "Father, I have sinned," and in the 32d Psalm he is the son restored to the Father's heart, looking up into his Father's face and saying, "Thou art my hiding place."

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. There are two books written by the same man, one of them called *The Seven Deadly Sins,* and the other *The Seven Cardinal Virtues.* Very few copies of the book about Sin were sold, but the book about Virtues has been very popular. People do not want to read about sins, said the publishers, but they do want to read about virtues. If it is your sin or virtue that your father or mother talks to you about, I am sure there is no doubt which subject you prefer to hear. The Bible is a very truthful book. It tells us about the sins as well as about the virtues of its heroes. David, our hero in whose fortunes we have been so interested, was not without his sins. We have seen how cruel he was, and how he lied and deceived Achish, the King of Gath, pretending that he was waging warfare against his own kindred when in reality he was fighting against the desert tribes and killing them all so that there should be no one left to tell the truth to Achish. Yet graver sins he committed, and the way in which he suffered because of them, and the joy over God's forgiveness are told in the beautiful Psalm which we study to-day.

For Older Pupils. What David learned through suffering he immortalized in song. We do not know how many of the Psalms were composed by him. It is generally believed that the headings of the Psalms, as they stand in our Bibles, were not originally a part of the Psalms, but were added by very early scholars as their opinion in regard to their authorship and character. David, however, "stamped his spirit on all; he was the Sweet Singer of Israel." "Had Raphael painted a picture of Hebrew as of European Poetry," says Dean Stanley, "David would have sat aloft at the summit of the Hebrew Parnassus, The Homer of Jewish Song." The Bible tells us of only one perfect man. "The character of David is seen in its fullness only when his Psalms

are faithfully studied," Dr. Geikie rightly tells us. "The influence of his age might lead him to acts which the higher morality of Christianity and even that of Moses condemn, but his repentant sorrow, his persistent struggle towards the right after every failure, his frank confession of his guilt, his grand trust in the mercy of God, and his instinctive communion with Him, has made the Psalter in every age, the book most read of all the Old Testament Canon."

Year after year and century after century, this 32d Psalm has been chanted by the Jews at the close of their services on the Day of Atonement. It is one of the seven great Penitential Psalms which Augustine had written on the wall opposite his bed that he might meditate on its words as he lay dying. It is one of the four Psalms which Luther deemed the most precious in the whole book, "because," he said, "it teaches that the pardon of sin comes without the law and without works to the man who believes."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Way to Forgiveness

Consciousness of Sin. In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Christ represents the Pharisee as saying, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." In a classification of Pharisees by rabbinical writers, there is one called the "Pharisee who said, 'Would that I knew of a sin I had myself committed that I might make reparation by an act of virtue,'" and there is another called "The calculating Pharisee who said 'my sins are more than counterbalanced by my virtues.'" There have always been small and great imitators of these Pharisees, like the little girl who was heard to pray, "O God, bless Harry and make him as good as I am!" How hard it is to pray in sincerity, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "The greatest of faults," says Carlyle, "is to be conscious of none." The sense of sin, like the sense of pain, is an evidence of life. The one who is unconscious of sin is, as Carlyle puts it, "divorced from sincerity, humility, and fact; is dead."

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," says John. He does not say, If we ask to be forgiven for sins in general, If we repeat the words while we secretly think that after all we have not committed any serious sin, If we ask God's forgiveness for any sin which perhaps we may have committed; but he says, If we confess our sins, If we face the fact that we have sinned, If we acknowledge that we have done this and that which we know we ought not to have done.

Do we say we have not committed murder like David, that we are not guilty of any heinous sin? A murderer is said to have gone to the gallows with a cheerful countenance, asserting that, with the trifling exception of a murder or two, he had lived an upright life and was not afraid to meet his Judge; and William Cullen Bryant, the poet, is said to have been unable to work at his office all one morning because his conscience troubled him, he had done wrong, a little boy flying a kite had passed him on his way to the office and when the string struck across his face he had seized and broken it. "The boy lost his kite, but I did not stop to pay him for it," said Bryant. "I did wrong, I ought to have paid him." The murderer possessed a coarse nature, he was habituated to evil, and his conscience was hardened: the poet possessed a fine nature, he was habituated to good, and his conscience was highly sen-

sitive. A spiritual nature will shrink from sins that others may make light of, he will feel the need and the joy of being forgiven for deeds that others may not even call misdeeds.

Remorse or Repentance. The two Latin words from which our word *remorse* comes mean literally *to bite back.* An evil deed retroacts, it acts back, and bites back, at the doer. What a powerful picture David has given of his suffering while his heart was filled with remorse!

"When I kept silence, my bones wasted away
Through my groaning all the day long.
For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me.
My moisture was changed as with the drought of summer."

"Man is compelled to repeat to himself things he desires to be silent about," says Victor Hugo, "and to listen to what he does not wish to hear, yielding to that mysterious power which says to him, Think. One can no more prevent the mind from returning to an idea than the sea from returning to the shore. With the sailor this is called the tide; with the guilty it is called remorse. God upheaves the soul as well as the ocean."

While David was remorseful he kept silence, afterwards he was repentant and acknowledged his sin to God. "Remorse is the consciousness of wrong doing with no sense of love; penitence is that same consciousness with the feeling of gratitude and tenderness added." Remorse is hopeless, it leads Judas to take his own life. Penitence is hopeful, it has faith in God's mercy, and it leads David to confess his sins.

Confession. David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. I acknowledged my sin unto thee and mine iniquity did I not hide, says the Psalm. And Nathan said unto David, the Lord hath put away thy sin. And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin, says the Psalm. Confession is followed by forgiveness, confession in which there is no guile, nothing kept back, no excuses made, a sincere, earnest, honest confession that acknowledges the sin, abhors it, and purposes with God's help to keep from it always and to bear in after life fruits worthy of repentance.

"Never man who climbed so high and fell so low as David!" exclaims Dr. N. D. Hillis. "Never one whose repentance was more absolute and all-inclusive. Never one who fought his way so persistently back toward the heights where good men dwell. Grateful to God for the lives of all the Bible heroes from Moses to Paul, to the end of time the prodigal and publican will be chiefly grateful for the life and career of David, the Old Testament prodigal, who epitomizes for us man's defeat through sin, and his recovery also through God's redeeming mercy."

II The Blessing of Forgiveness

Blessed is he whose Transgression is Forgiven. There is a Turkish fable that every one is accompanied by two angels who record his good and his evil deeds. The angel of good writes down a good deed as soon as it is committed, and seals it at once, for it is done with forever. The angel of evil writes down an evil deed as soon as it is committed, too, but instead of sealing it at once, he waits till midnight. If before midnight the man repents and exclaims, "Gracious Allah; I have sinned, forgive me!" the angel rubs out what he has written, but if the man does not repent, his record is then sealed.

There is a helpful thought in this fable. Our good deeds are done with forever and are counted to us for righteousness, our evil deeds may be repented of and forgiven, so that they are covered from God's sight and are not imputed to us. The deeds themselves can not be recalled, the evil they have done to us and to others can not be helped, but they may be forgiven and we may start anew as if they had not been. This thought is thus expressed by one of the characters in W. N. Harben's *The Substitute:* "You've been blamin' yerself fer some'n another man done. It was a man you haint seen in thirty odd year that shot my son in a hasty passion. God don't hold you — the new man — accountable fer that, but He's been holdin' you accountable fer thinkin' so ill of Him."

Dante's Purgatorio. It is a noble thing, that Purgatorio, "Mountain of Purification"; an emblem of the noblest conception of Dante's age. If Sin is so hateful, and Hell is and must be so rigorous, awful, yet in Repentance is man purified; Repentance is the grand Christian act. It is beautiful, the way Dante works it out. The *tremolar dell' onde,* "trembling" of the ocean waves, under the first pure gleam of morning, dawning afar on the wandering two, is as the type of an altered mood. Hope has now dawned; never-dying Hope, if in company still with heavy Sorrow. The obscure sojourn of dæmons and reprobates is underfoot; a soft breathing of penitence mounts higher and higher to the Throne of Mercy itself. "Pray for me," the denizens of that Mount of Pain all say to him. They toil painfully up by that winding steep, "bent down like corbels of a building," some of them,— crushed together so "for the sin of pride"; yet nevertheless in years, in ages and æons, they shall have reached the top, which is Heaven's gate, and by Mercy shall have been admitted. The joy, too, of all when one has prevailed; the whole Mountain shakes with joy, and a psalm of praise rises when one soul has perfected repentance and got its sin and misery left behind! I call this a noble embodiment of a true, noble thought. *Thomas Carlyle, Heroes and Hero-Worship.*

III The Consequences of Sin

Retribution follows Wrong. Though David repented his sins and was forgiven by God, he could not escape the evil consequences of his sins. Even while telling David that God forgave him, Nathan foretold the penalties he should suffer. His last days were filled with bitterness and woe, he reaped the fruitage of his sin in the hatred and rebellion and murder in his own family. God forgives the repentant sinner, but He does not make inoperative the universal law that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Forgiveness of sins never includes remission of consequences. "Sin, and though God's love sweeps away the hopelessness of the future, and God's spirit puts in you a new will and new courage, it shall be with heavier weights that you run your race, with increased temptations that you must battle up to the end of the day."

Retribution and Pardon. The Bible teaches everywhere, both directly and by implication, that sin must be punished. Its pages abound in concrete illustrations of the fact that sin can not be committed with impunity. Let it suffice to recall the examples of Moses and Saul and David and Peter.

Nature teaches the same lesson. No law of mind or of body can be transgressed without penalty. On every side of us, and in everything we do, we

run up against laws which must be obeyed, or we must suffer in consequence. Violate the lay of electricity and the mysterious power will strike; the law of fire, and you will be burned; the law of wind and tide, and you will go upon the rocks; the law of gravitation, and you will be hurled into the abyss. Thus the book of Nature, like the Word of God, declares that every transgression and every disobedience must receive a just recompense of reward.

Now what shall we say as to the forgivableness of sin? How can we reconcile the certainty of retribution with the doctrine of pardon? Punishment and forgiveness seem to be utterly conflicting ideas. If we have built with unseasoned timber and daubed with untempered mortar, can our house be rebuilt, or must we stay in the old structure and take the consequences of our misdoing? That question strikes to the very bottom of evangelical religion. The Bible answers it in terms too plain to be misunderstood. If it tells us again and again that sin must be punished, it tells us again and again, in warmer phraseology, if possible, that sin may be forgiven.

A sharp distinction ought to be made between forgiveness and the removal of punishment. God through the suffering of the cross, which is the suffering of the undivided Deity, blots out our sin, but the poverty of soul, the starved spiritual nature, the reduced volume of being, consequent on sin, goes with us still. The penitent thief who is saved just as he swings into eternity, carries with him the emptiness of the life he has wasted. Heaven will always mean less to him than if he had devoted his years to God. Paul, speaking of certain careless believers who built upon their foundation of wood, hay and stubble, declares that they shall be saved as by fire, and shall suffer loss.

A child becomes disobedient and rebellious. It runs off and gets hurt. Then it hastens back to its mother and is promptly forgiven. The hurt is still there; the smart remains; but is it not infinitely easier to bear it in the mother's arms and in the sunshine of the mother's love than it would be to bear it alone and under the frown of her displeasure? So, while sin must be punished, it is one thing to bear the punishment in exile and banishment, under the awful shadow of God's displeasure, and an immensely different thing to bear it under the warmth and tenderness of His sympathy, while resting securely in the arms of His love. *Robert Francis Coyle, The Church.*

The Mark of Sin. Mr. B——, a wealthy and respectable physician in a Southern city, died a few months ago. He bore throughout the greater part of his life a strange cross, of which no one but his most intimate friends were cognizant.

When a lad of twelve years, B—, like many other boys of that age, grew restless and discontented with home. He ran away, and for a year was a cabin-boy on a ship. While there, ambitious to be decorated like the other sailors, he had a word of coarse meaning tattooed upon his arm.

Before the year was over he repented of his folly bitterly, and returned to be forgiven, and taken back to the old pure life and tenderness of home. The "wild oats" were sown, the outbreak was over and soon almost forgotten by his family. He was an earnest, hard working student, and an affectionate son, and grew up into an honorable, useful manhood.

"I might," he once said to a friend, "have forgotten that wretched year with all its damage to body and soul, but for that accursed mark; I could never wash or scrape it out. There it was with its vile meaning stamping me for life. I was always conscious of it; always in fear lest I should expose it to

my wife and children. They knew it was there. But I hoped that they would somehow forget."

It was visible even after death. A friend covering it closely said, "It is hard that so good a man must carry to his coffin the sin of his foolish youth."—*The Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Repentance is less strong and less beautiful than his elder brother, Innocence. *F. W. Farrar.*

Repentance is toward God, and not toward punishment. *Pentecost.*

Lord, I repent; help Thou mine impenitence! *Christina Rossetti.*

God covers sin, but man must not cover his sin before God. *Perowne.*

The very curse of an evil deed is that it must always continue to engender evil. *Schiller.*

God hath yoked to guilt
Her pale tormenter — misery. *Bryant.*

Let no man despair of God's mercies to forgive him unless he be sure that his sins be greater than God's mercies. *Jeremy Taylor.*

The slightest sorrow for sin is sufficient if it produces amendment, and the greatest is insufficient if it does not. *Colton.*

Sin and happiness certainly do not travel on the same car, for they are not journeying on the same road. *New York Observer.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whosoever confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy. Prov. 28. 13.

There is no man that sinneth not. 1 Kings 8. 46.

The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1. 7–9.

A cheerful heart is a good medicine;
But a broken spirit drieth up the bones. Prov. 17. 22.

They have not cried unto me with their heart, but they howl upon their beds. Hosea 7. 14.

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. Psalm 51. 17.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, is John's plain statement to us. Let us deal honestly with ourselves, and let us acknowledge to ourselves and to God the many sins for which we need His forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not to be bought by fasts nor penance; it is to be had for the asking.

The Prodigal Son returned from a far country to his father's house and said, "Father, I have sinned," and received his father's forgiveness, but how much better would it have been for him had he never left that father's house

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

and never proved himself unworthy of being called his son! There is something better than repentance, and that is to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man; there is something better than forgiveness of sin, and that is not to need forgiveness. Sinless we shall never be, but we need never stray into the far country, and with divine help we may struggle to overcome the sin which doth so easily beset us, till we rise higher and higher toward the plain of what is good and best.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Oh how happy is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How happy is the man who confesses with sincerity! for Jehovah imputes no guilt to him.

As long as my lips were sealed against confession, I wasted away with my ceaseless crying. Day and night Thy hand lay heavy upon me; my life was dried up like a brook in the summer heat. But the moment I resolved to confess my sin openly and hide it no more, that moment didst Thou remove the guilt thereof.

Knowing as I do the joy of forgiveness, I would fain urge every godly one to pray to Thee in time of trouble, that he may not be overtaken by the rushing waters. To them, as to me, Thou canst be a shelter, preserving them from danger and bringing deliverance on every side.

There comes to me, too, this assurance from my God; "I will give thee wisdom," He says, "and teach thee henceforward the way thou shouldst go, with My gracious eye steadfastly upon thee."

But, if God is to forgive, men must gladly yield themselves to the discipline divine, nor must they rebel like the senseless brutes, which have to be controlled by bit and bridle, else they can not be brought nigh.

So the secret of blessedness is trust in God. He whose trust is in Him will experience the love of God on every hand, while the godless have sorrows many. Be glad therefore in your God, and rejoice in him, O Israel; yea, shout for very joy. *George Edgar McFayden, The Messages of the Psalmists.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. David the poet.
2. The seven Penitential Psalms: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read about the way in which Absalom murdered Amnon. (2 Sam. 13. 23–39.) 2. Tell the story of the wise woman of Tekoa. (2 Sam. 14. 1–24.) 3. How was Absalom restored to the king's favor? (2 Sam. 14. 28–33.) 4. What was said about Absalom's beauty in 2 Sam. 14. 25? 5. In what lessons did Samuel warn the people that their sovereign would have chariots and runners? 6. What brother of Absalom later imitated his pretentions to the throne? (1 Kings 1. 5.) 7. What transaction in regard to Ruth took place at the gate of the city of Bethlehem? (Ruth 4. 1–10.) 8. What officers had the king to help him in the administration of justice? (2 Sam. 8. 15–18.) How do you account for Absalom's remark in verse 3?

LESSON V — NOVEMBER 1

ABSALOM REBELS AGAINST DAVID

II Sam. 15. (Read II Sam. 13–16.) Commit vv. 5, 6.

Golden Text

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Ex. 20. 12.

LESSON TEXT Samuel 15. 1–12

1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was *so,* that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* of one of the tribes of Israel.

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee.

4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5 And it was *so,* that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron.

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *After this.* After Absalom's restoration to favor, 14. 33. *Chariots.* R. V., *a chariot.* Absalom provides himself with a chariot, horses, and runners in imitation of foreign kings, and thus makes an impression on the people as the natural successor to the throne. See 1 Sam. 8. 11 and 1 Kings 1. 5.

2. *Rose up early.* This was his customary practice. *The way of the gate.* The road along which persons came to prefer their suit to the king, who sat at the gate of the city, or at the gate of the palace. *When any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment.* R. V., *when any man had a suit*

which should come to the king for judgment. Of one of the tribes. Each one named the tribe to which he belonged.

3. *Absalom said.* After listening to each man's case, he pronounces judgment to suit him, and insinuates that his father did not administer justice rightly.

4. *Which.* R. V., *who.*

5. *Took him.* R. V., *took hold of him.* Compare 2 Sam. 20. 9.

6. *Absalom stole the hearts.* "This expression does not mean that Absalom captivated the affections of his father's subjects, but that he duped or befooled them as Jacob duped Laban (Gen. 31.20, 26, where the same expression is used). The heart in Hebrew psychology was the seat of intellect and conscience rather than of feeling." *Kennedy.*

7. *After forty years.* R. V., *at the end of forty years.* At the end of the fortieth year of David's reign. R. V. margin, "According to Syriac and some editions of Septuagint Version, four years." Josephus also says "four years"; the forty is understood by some scholars to be a clerical error for four, and is to be reckoned from the time of Absalom's reconciliation with his father.

8. *If the Lord shall bring me again indeed.* R. V., *If Jehovah shall indeed bring me again.* Compare Gen. 28. 20–22. *Serve Jehovah.* Offer sacrifice. See verse 12.

9. *Go in peace.* The customary words of permission and farewell.

10. *Spies.* Messengers sent in secret. *The sound of the trumpet.* He was to be proclaimed king at one time throughout the country. *Reigneth.* R. V., *is king.*

11. *Called.* R. V., *united. In their simplicity.* In their ignorance of Absalom's purpose.

12. *Gilonite.* Native of Giloh. *While he offered.* R. V., *while he was offering.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

3. *There is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.* The court was organized on a more extensive scale than in the kingdom of Saul. David alone was, of course, the chief justice, and was accessible to all his people. The case of the wise woman of Tekoa is enough to show this, and Absalom's insinuation of lack of due attention on the king's part to cases of wrong must be taken as the demagogue's perversion of the truth in his own interest. We hear now, for the first time, of an officer whose business it was to keep track of public affairs — a monitor for the king. Two chief military officers are named — Joab over the army, and Benaiah over the Cherethites, and Pelethites. We can understand this only by assuming that Joab was the commander-in-chief, who led the whole effective force of the nation when it was called out, while Benaiah was the second in command. The Cherethites and Pelethites were the bodyguard, a band of mercenaries recruited, as the name implies, among foreigners, chiefly Philistines; the nucleus of the force was David's band of followers in the wilderness. A picked force of thirty men was distinguished by a separate organization under their own commander. We also hear of a scribe, apparently the king's private secretary, and two priests are now counted among the court officers. One of these was Abiathar, the survivor of Saul's massacre at Nob, who had carried the ephod during David's wilderness sojourn. The other was

Used by Courtesy of M. De Brunoff Copyright, 1904

ABSALOM—*Tissot*

Zadok. The royal chapel seems to have had other functionaries, among whom David's sons were enrolled. Now, for the first time, we hear of an overseer of the forced labor, showing the way in which the king construed his prerogative. There was also a council whose members were called Friends of the king. They were entertained regularly at the royal table. *H. P. Smith, Old Testament History.*

5. *He took hold of him and kissed him.* The Speaker's Commentary suggests a comparison with the description of Bolingbroke's behavior which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Richard II:

Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green
Observed his courtship to the common people;
How he did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy,
What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles.

12. *Absalom sent for Ahithophel.* What swept Ahithophel into the ranks of this great conspiracy? The reason is given in the genealogical tables, which show that he was the grandfather of Bathsheba, and that his son, Eliam, was the comrade and friend of Uriah. *F. B. Meyer.*

13. *There came a messenger to David, saying, the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.* In seeking to realize the anguish of David at this time, we think of the saying which the great dramatist has put into the mouth of the old British King, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." Or of those lines of another poet which he penned in quite another connection, but which are equally appropriate here:

"So the struck eagle stretched upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
View'd his own feather on the fatal dart,
That wing'd the shaft that quiver'd in his heart;
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel;
While the same plumage that had warm'd his nest,
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast."

W. M. Taylor, David, King of Israel.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses and fifty men to run before him.* These were unknown signs of luxury and pomp in Israel, but common among Eastern kings. Dr. H. C. Trumbull, in *Studies in Social Life,* speaks of the present custom in Cairo: "One of the commonest sights was a carriage of a Pasha, or a carriage containing ladies of the Khedive's harem, preceded through the crowded streets by one *sais* (forerunner), or by two or more, calling aloud for the clearing of the way." It had not been settled which one of David's sons should be his successor, for the law of primogeniture had never wholly prevailed in the East, and by assuming the royal state Absalom laid claim to the throne.

2. *Absalom rose up early.* On account of the heat, it was the usual custom to attend to public business early in the morning. "At the present time the greatest sovereigns in the East rise at daybreak, and after their morning de-

votions proceed immediately to the transaction of the day's official business."

2. *The way of the gate.* The gate of a city has always been in the East the public meeting place for the people. Among the Israelites, justice was administered at the gate, and the hearing of suits was public. The kings transacted business either in the shade of the city gate, or at the gate of the palace. (See 2 Sam. 19. 8.) The Cabinet of the Sultan of Turkey is known at the present time as "The Ottoman Porte" (*Porte* being the French word for *gate*), and we speak of the Turkish government as "The Sublime Porte" (The High Gate).

7. *Let me go and pay my vow to Jehovah in Hebron.* The ark was at Jerusalem, but David does not seem surprised that Absalom wishes to pay his vow by sacrificing at Hebron. Arabs to-day make vows which may sometimes be paid where they live, but more often must be paid at a holy place somewhere else.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Hebron, where Absalom went ostensibly to sacrifice to the Lord, was eighteen miles south-west from Jerusalem, the royal city. Hebron had been the capital of David while he was king of Judah alone, and it may be that the people were dissatisfied at the removal of the capital to Jerusalem and were therefore the more ready to take up Absalom's cause.

Geshur in Syria, where Absalom had been in exile, was north of the Yarmuk River and east of the Upper Jordan.

Giloh, the city of Ahithophel, was south of Hebron.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Amnon, the son of David's wife Ahinoam, did a great wrong to Tamar, the daughter of Maacah, David's only royal wife, but David instead of punishing him, merely rebuked him. Absalom, Tamar's brother, determined to avenge her, glad at the same time, perhaps, to put out of the way the elder half-brother who might succeed to the throne, which he had resolved should be his. He waited two years, and then at a feast to which he invited all his friends had Amnon slain when half drunk with wine. To escape the consequences of the deed, he fled to his grandfather, the King of Geshur. Here he remained three years till, through the efforts of Joab, he was recalled. Joab used the same art that Nathan had used when he convicted David of his guilt; through a "wise woman of Tekoa" he obtained from the king a judgment on a fictitious case which committed him to the recall of his son. David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, but refused to see him. After two years of such treatment, Absalom compelled Joab to intercede for him, and he was restored to the king's favor. While chafing under his father's treatment he formed the plans which he carried out during the succeeding four years for destroying the people's confidence in the king and winning a large following with which he hoped to seize the throne. His rebellion occurred at the close of the fortieth year of David's reign. (Several years earlier, if we consider the forty in verse 7 a clerical error.) Perhaps David's numbering of the people, the three days' pestilence that followed, the purchasing of Araunah's threshing-floor for the temple site, and the preparations for the building of the

temple (2 Sam. 24. 1–25; 1 Chron. 21. 1–29. 22) occurred during the years of Absalom's plotting and made the people so discontented with the heavy burdens they had to bear that they were more ready to favor Absalom's revolt against the government. In connection with the preparations for the temple, David caused (the first time) Solomon to be made king. (1 Chron. 23.1.)

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. James M. Barrie, the writer, says in his life of his mother: "Everything that I could do for her I have done since I was a boy. I look back through the years, and I can not see the smallest thing undone." Is not this a beautiful thing for a man to be able to say of the way he has honored his mother all his life? David was not blessed like Mrs. Barrie in the treatment he received from his sons; several of them caused him great trouble, but the most undutiful and wicked of them all was Absalom.

For Older Pupils. Absalom was the only one of David's sons whose mother was a princess. No doubt this fact led him early to believe that he was the rightful heir to the throne. He had great personal attractions, "in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for beauty," and this would lead him to consider himself superior to all his brothers. But Bathsheba had more influence with David than did his other wives, and her son, Solomon, Absalom knew, was the favorite son. It was evident that if he attained to the throne, it would not be in the regular way.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

Absalom's Baseness. It seems almost incredible that Absalom could so long and deliberately strive to undermine his father's reputation and regard among his people, and then resort to arms to gain the throne for himself. He had no more honor for God than he had for his father, and the reason he offers for going to Hebron to make a special offering to God is as hypocritical as all his other actions. "To him truth and falsehood, right and wrong, honor and shame, are all essentially alike."

When King James IV of Scotland was a boy, he took up arms against his father, and his manhood was made bitter with remorse for the deed. In penance he wore underneath his outer garments an iron belt, and every year he added to it an extra weight, to remind himself that his remorse should only increase with his years. Absalom was slain by Joab, but had he lived there is no probability that he would have repented. His dark deeds were so deliberately planned, and their execution so long in carrying out, that we see his filial baseness was a part of his nature, not a sudden hasty act. He is an example of all a son should not be.

Dr. Johnson's Penitence. Dr. Johnson was missed one day by friends whom he was visiting, and on his return in the evening he thus explained his absence to his hostess: "Fifty years ago I committed a breach of filial piety, which has ever since lain heavily on my mind. My father was a bookseller, and used to attend Uttoxeter Market, and open a stall for the sale of his books. One day, being ill, he asked me to go in his place. My pride prevented

me from doing my duty, and I refused. In memory of this disobedience I went to-day to Uttoxeter, and, going to the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head, and stood bare for an hour before the stall which my father had formerly used, exposed to the sneers of the standers-by and the inclemency of the weather. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory for the only instance, I believe, of contumacy to my father."

Filial Ingratitude. It is the base ingratitude of Goneril and Regan, in contrast with the faithful love of Cordelia, that is the central thought of Shakespeare's great tragedy of *King Lear*. The old, gray-haired king rushing forth from his palace, out into the drenching storm, his heart broken, not because of the loss of his crown, but because of the cruel treatment of his daughters upon whom he had bestowed all his gifts.

One Way of Dishonoring Parents. A young man who occupies pleasant rooms in a large city was entertaining a guest from his country home.

"You see I honor my father and my mother," he said, pointing to two portraits on the walls of his sitting room. "You do in sentiment, Frank," answered his visitor, "but if you will forgive an old friend's speaking plainly, your principles do not honor them to the same degree. Those portraits have looked down on a good many card parties and wine suppers and wasted hours. They have seen neglected the work which you came to the city to do, and your old habits of plain living and high thinking forgotten very often. Think it over, won't you?" *Youth's Companion.*

Carlyle's Words. Among Carlyle's papers was found one on which he himself had written, "My last letter to my mother." "My dear, good mother," he wrote, "let it ever be a comfort to you, however weak you are, that you did your part honorably and well while in strength, and were a noble mother to me and to us all. I am now myself grown old, and have had various things to do and suffer for many years; but there is nothing I ever had to be so thankful for as the mother I had. If there has been good in the things I have uttered in the world's hearing, it was *your* voice essentially that was speaking through me; essentially what you and my brave father meant and taught me to mean. May God reward you, my dearest mother, for all you have done for me; I never can!"

Carlyle's father was a rough stone mason, but Carlyle was ready to acknowledge his indebtedness to him. In his *Reminiscences,* which were published after his death, he thus speaks of him: "I feel to my father — so great, though so neglected, so generous also toward me — a strange tenderness, and mingled pity and reverence peculiar to the case, infinitely soft and near my heart. Was he not a sacrifice to me? Had I stood in his place, could he not have stood in mine? Thou good father, well may I forever honor thy memory."

II Provoke not your Children to Wrath

David's Responsibility for Absalom's Deed. "Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it," says Proverbs 22. 6. How had David trained Absalom? What led his son to rebel against him? The Mosaic law in regard to the training of children is very severe. In Deuteronomy 21. 18–21, we read: "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, that will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and, though they chastise him, will not hearken unto them; then shall

his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, 'This our son was stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice. . . . .' And all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones." Stories of similarly severe treatment of rebellious sons by the stern old Romans are well known. Lucius Junius Brutus learned that his two sons, Titus and Tiberius, were among conspirators who had planned the destruction of the government. He ordered them "scourged with rods, according to the law, and then beheaded by the lictors in the forum, and he neither turned aside his eyes nor shed any tears over them, for they had been false unto their country and had offended against the law."

David's treatment of Absalom was thoroughly weak. When he allowed Absalom to return from Geshur, whither he had fled after killing his half-brother Amnon, he said that he might return to his own house, but he himself would not see him. For two years Absalom lived at Jerusalem without seeing the king. David neither punished Absalom for his crime nor restored him to favor. He recalled him without receiving any sign of repentance from him, and then irritated him by excluding him from court. All this time the narrator allows us to see that David "mourned for his son every day" while he was in exile, and after he returned he "longed to go forth unto Absalom," but of this Absalom himself knew nothing.

David's treatment of Absalom and his subsequent grief over his death were paralleled recently by a father in New York who had his son sent to the Reform School on Blackwell's Island, and paid no attention to letter after letter which the boy wrote him begging for forgiveness and promising to live uprightly if he would bail him out, and then, when the boy attempted to swim away from the island and was drowned and the body was brought to his father, the father, who had really loved him all this time although the boy knew it not, swooned and died.

Some Guilty Parents. A man was tried in the criminal court of a western town not long ago on the charge of poisoning his children. One of them had died; the others were enfeebled for life. The poison, it was alleged, had not been given all at once, but in small doses, mixed with their food during a long period.

The man was an ignorant drunkard, who had inherited a cruel, cold temperament; but his neighbors could not be convinced of his guilt by any proof, so terrible and unnatural was the crime. That a father should slowly kill the bodies of his children, and watch them waste away through months and years, unmoved, seemed to them incredible. Yet do parents never kill the minds and souls of their children by such slow, inexorable poison?

The man who by the force of example, by words and habits, gives to his sons a love for brutal sports, or for stimulants — what is he doing?

The man who, in the same way, gives to his boys a cynical, sneering temper, who teaches them to laugh at honesty, at the purity of women, and, more than all, at religion, is he less guilty than the murderer who poisons the bodies of his children?

Is the mother innocent of murder, who debases her child's innocent soul by incessant petty doses of vanity? That soul might receive thoughts as broad as charity and as high as Heaven; it might be filled with love and truth and God Himself. It becomes, instead, a shrine for new gowns or gossip.

"Thou shalt do no murder," was not meant only for those who kill the body. *Youth's Companion.*

III Flattery

What is Flattery? How Absalom flattered those Israelites when he, the prince who rode in his chariot accompanied by his fifty runners, would not let them humble themselves before him, but raised them up and kissed them, as if they were brothers! How interested he pretended to be in their suits, how just he found all their claims, how he longed to be in a place of power so that he might mete out justice to them! Oh, Absalom loved them, of this they felt sure, so skilfully did he flatter them. "We are all pervious to flattery," says Mr. Spurgeon, "we like the soothing cordial, only it must not be labeled 'flattery'; for we abhor it if it be so called; call it by any other name, and we drink it in, even as the ox drinketh in water."

Must we, then, never show an interest in others? some one asks. Of course we must, but we must also feel an interest in them, an interest that is sincere and genuine, not feigned for the sake of being popular or of winning something to our own advantage. Little children have a rare power of understanding who are their real friends. "She smiles with her face at me, but she doesn't smile inside," a child explained, when asked why she did not like some one, who claimed to care so much for her.

Must we not make it pleasant for others, say nice things to them about themselves? The genuine word of praise and encouragement should not be withheld, but the empty compliment is an untruth that usually harms both the speaker and the hearer, leading the speaker on to still greater falsity, and the hearer to vanity.

There is an amusing record of exchange of flatteries recorded in the *Revelations of the Life of Talleyrand* between Madam de Staël and the Abbé Monti, both of whom were past masters in the art. "I never counted upon so great an honor as that of meeting the first writer of the age," said the Abbé, bowing low, and Madam de Staël responded, "I little dreamed when I arose this morning that the day would be marked by so auspicious an event as the meeting with the Abbé." Monti told her that he had "devoured every word that had escaped from Sappho's pen," and Sappho was not to be outdone, for she declared she could not sleep till she read his charming odes from the Italian. The Abbé presented Madam with a volume of poetry, and she seized it eagerly, exclaiming, "This is indeed a treasure, and will be prized by me far beyond gold or jewels." When Madam de Staël gave him a copy of her *L'Exile,* he kissed it reverently. But sad to relate, when they left neither one thought to take away the precious gift, and neither returned to claim it.

The Chinese Method. An American lady one day going into a Chinese kitchen was mystified to see the cook rubbing the molasses over the mouth of a hideous paper image nailed to the wall. Upon inquiry she learned that the image was a kitchen idol, the duty of which was to watch and report to some higher god whatever was said and done in the kitchen, and that its mouth was anointed in this fashion so that it could relate only sweet things.

"I have a lurking sympathy for the idol," the lady declared. "I can understand its helpless misery. Many and many a time have people heaped compliments and gifts and repulsive sweetness upon me in order to seal my lips and

pervert my judgment. I am not sure that the crude molasses of the heathen Chinese is better than concocted 'taffy' of more civilized acquaintances." *Lucy Elliot Keeler, If I were Young Again.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Of what beasts is the bite most dangerous? Of wild beasts, that of the slanderer, of tame ones, that of the flatterer. *Diogenes.*

Praise is an estimate of value: flattery is the effort to compensate for the lack of value. *H. Clay Trumbull.*

Better a home too strict in government than a home a bit too lax. *Vincent.*

It is much easier to flatter than to praise. *Jean Paul Richter.*

No artist's work is so high, so noble, so grand, so enduring, so important for all time as the making of character in a child. *Charlotte Cushman.*

The parent who does not secure the allegiance and obedience of his child, is as really violating the fifth commandment as is the child who disobeys and dishonors him. *William M. Taylor.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

A flattering mouth worketh ruin. Prov. 26. 28.

I have known him to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. Gen. 18. 19.

The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: He hath ceased to be wise and to do good. Psa. 36. 3.

His mouth was smooth as butter,
But his heart was war:
His words were softer than oil,
Yet were they drawn swords. Psa. 15. 21.

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord. Eph. 6. 4.

Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted,
Who did eat of my bread,
Hath lifted up his heel against me. Psa. 41. 9.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

God has given us the love and care of father and mother, and we owe them our love and obedience in return, obedience granted not grudgingly but wholeheartedly, and love lavished loyally.

"Children are the glory or the gloom of old age," says Doctor Trumbull. Which one will the course I am pursuing, or the character I am forming, lead me to become to my parents?

The true word of praise and encouragement I will speak, but I will never descend to the wiles of the flatterer's arts.

The two hundred men who went to Hebron "in their simplicity" probably joined Absalom's cause after reaching Hebron because they could not go back without suspicion. I will not be led by my simplicity into any wrong.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

After Absalom was restored to his father's favor, he began a systematic course of treachery to arouse dissatisfaction with his father's government, and to win the people to himself, purposing when the time was ripe to seize the throne. He showed the people what a magnificent king he would make by assuming the royal state, driving forth in a chariot with fifty men to run before him. He made it his practice to rise early every day and stand by the gate to court the favor of those who came with their suits to David for judgment. He showed great interest in each one, asked him about his home and about his case, which he declared in every instance to be right and just. Although oriental justice is meted out speedily, yet the number of cases would no doubt cause delay, and perhaps David, being old and feeble, was not able to attend personally to them. Craftily Absalom said there was no one deputed by the king to hear them, and told them how different it would be if he only were in power, for his chief interest was the public good. He would not allow the customary obeisance, but kissed them all as his friends. In these ways he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Absalom planned for a simultaneous uprising against the king throughout the country. First he asked and obtained David's permission to go to Hebron to pay a vow there, which he claimed to have made when in exile at Geshur. He invited two hundred of the chief men of Jerusalem to go with him to offer sacrifices to the Lord, and they "went in their simplicity," not knowing what he purposed doing. Ahithophel, David's trusted counselor, joined him. Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the kingdom to announce that at the sound of the trumpet Absalom would be king. The conspiracy grew.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The arts of unscrupulous politicians.

2. The mother puts in the commas and the semi-colons into a child's life, but the father puts in the colons and periods. *Jean Paul Richter.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Tell the story of David's flight from Jerusalem. (2 Sam. 15. 13–23.) 2. How was Absalom who was so skilful in deceiving others, himself deceived? (2 Sam. 15. 32–37; 16. 16–19; 17. 5–14.) 3. Why was Ahithophel's counsel (2 Sam. 16. 20–17. 4) wiser for Absalom than that of Hushai? 4. What did David charge his generals concerning Absalom? (2 Sam. 18. 5.) 5. What did Absalom wish to have done to his father? (2 Sam. 17. 1–4.) 6. How did Absalom meet his death? (2 Sam. 18. 9–15.) Why did Joab kill him? 7. What monument had Absalom prepared to perpetuate his memory? (2 Sam. 18. 18.) What became of his body? (18. 17.) 8. How many men lost their lives in the rebellion? (2 Sam. 18. 7, 8.) 9. How was news carried in Old Testament times? 10. When did Moses wish he could sacrifice himself for others? (Ex. 32. 32.) Paul? (Rom. 9. 3.) 11. What was Moses' commandment to Aaron on the death of his sons Nadab and Abihu? (Lev. 10. 6, 7.)

LESSON VI — NOVEMBER 8

DAVID GRIEVES FOR ABSALOM

II Sam. 18. 24–33. (Read II Sam. 18.) Commit v. 33.

Golden Text

A foolish son is a grief to his father. Prov. 17. 25.

LESSON TEXT Samuel 18. 24–33.

24 And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, saying, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, Methinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29 And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*.

30 And the king said *unto him,* Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, Cushi came: and Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cushi, *Is* the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

24. *And David sat.* R. V., *Now David was sitting. Between the two gates.* In the space between the inner and outer gates of the entrance to the city. *Over the gate.* R. V., *of the gate.*

25. *If he be alone.* In that case he is a messenger from the battle-field; had there been several together, the probability would be that they were fugitives from the battle.

26. *The watchman called unto the porter and said.* "Read, with a slight change, 'and the watchman upon the gate called out and said.'" *Kennedy.*

27. *Me thinketh.* R. V., *I think the running is like the running of Ahimaaz.* So Jehu was recognized by his manner of driving (2 Kings 9. 20).

28. *All is well.* R. V., margin, *Peace.* The customary salutation. *He fell*

down to the earth upon his face before the king. R. V., *he bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth.* The customary prostration before a king.

29. *Is the young man Absalom safe?* R. V., *Is it well with the young man Absalom?* See also in verse 32. Contrast with this anxiety of David's, Absalom's purpose to have his father killed (2 Sam. 17. 1–4). *But I knew not what it was.* Compare verse 20.

30. *Unto him.* Omitted in R. V.

31. *Cushi.* R. V., *the Cushite. Tidings, my lord.* R. V., *Tidings for my lord.*

32. *Rise against.* R. V., *rise up against.*

33. *Would God I had died.* R. V., *would I had died.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

24. *The watchman looked, and, behold, a man running alone.*

Somewhere at every hour
The watchman on the tower
Looks forth, and sees the fleet
Approach of the hurrying feet
Of messengers that bear
The tidings of despair.
O Absalom, my son!
He goes forth from the door,
Who shall return no more.
With him our joy departs;
The light goes out in our hearts;
In the Chamber over the Gate
We sit disconsolate.
O Absalom, my son! *Longfellow.*

32. *The enemies of the king be as that young man is.* The chance of executing judgment on the arch-rebel who had caused so much misery, and been guilty of crimes never before heard of in Israel, and thus ending for ever an insurrection that might have dragged its slow length along for harassing years to come, was too much for Joab. "How could you see Absalom hanging in an oak and not put an end to his mischievous life?" he asks the man who tells him he has seen him in that plight. Seizing three darts, he rushes to the place, and thrusts them through Absalom's heart. And his ten armor bearers finish the business with their swords. We need not suppose that he was altogether indifferent to the feelings of David; but he may have been seized by an overwhelming conviction that Absalom's death was the only effectual way of ending this most guilty insurrection, and so preserving the country from ruin. Absalom living, whether banished or imprisoned, would be a constant and most fearful danger. Absalom dead, great though the king's distress for the time might be, would be the preservation of the country. But it is plain that to his dying day David never forgave Joab."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

24. *David sat between the two gates.* The gates, or rather gate-houses, of

Used by Courtesy of M. De Brunoff Copyright, 1904

DAVID SEEING THE MESSENGER ARRIVE—*Tissot*

an Eastern city may be described as extensions outwards and inwards of the city wall, with an outer and inner gateway. The space between these was lined with stone benches, on which the elders sat "in the gate," as did David now and later (19. 8). This particular gatehouse had an upper story, the roof of which was apparently on a level with the wall. *A. R. S. Kennedy, Century Bible.*

26. *The watchmon saw another man running; and the watchman called unto the porter.* Even strong walls and double gates would not of themselves secure a city from the enemy. Men were therefore employed to watch day and night on the top of the walls, and especially by the gates. It was thus that the messengers from the army were seen long before they reached the place where David anxiously sat. It was the business of the porter to open and shut the gates at the proper time. In this case the porter, being in a convenient position below, could receive the intelligence from the watchman above and communicate it to David. *Freeman, Handbook.*

32. *The enemies of my lord the king be as that young man is.* This was a delicate way of telling David that the rebel Absalom was dead. A person in communicating by letter intelligence of the death of a friend, does not always say, in so many plain terms, "He is dead;" but, "Would that all our enemies were now as our friend Mutto!" "Ah! were they all as he, we should have peace in our village." *Roberts.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Absalom's death was reported to David at the gateway of Mahanaim, a city across the Jordan in Eastern Palestine, between the Jabbok and the Yarmuk Rivers. The location of the "Forest of Ephraim," where the battle had been fought, is not known; probably it was between Mahanaim and the Jordan River.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Absalom's plot was disclosed to David; taken by surprise, he saw no hope except in flight. With his household and his Philistine body-guard of six hundred men and accompanied by Joab his general, Abishai, Joab's brother, and Ittai the Gittite (who had steadfastly persisted in following his king's fallen fortunes despite David's urging that he turn back to Absalom), David left his capital, crossed the brook Kidron, and ascended the Mount of Olives. Zadok and Abiathar the priests started with the ark, but David bade them return. Hushai, also, his trusted counsellor, David sent back to the city, bidding him gain the good will of Absalom and then report to him (David) through the priests and their sons what was being done.

Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth came and represented that Mephibosheth, ungrateful for all the king's kindness to him, had decided to remain in Jerusalem, hoping to gain his father's throne. As the sad-hearted king went his way toward the Jordan, Shimei, a man of the house of Saul, followed along the hill above and threw stones and dust at him and cursed him, for his treatment long ago of the sons of Saul. Abishai wished to slay him, but David said that his own son was seeking his life, "how much more may this Benjamin now do it?" And he would not suffer him to be harmed.

Absalom meanwhile made a triumphal entry of Jerusalem and was anointed

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

king. Ahithophel counseled that a force be sent after David at once, before he had time to collect his forces, but Hushai, acting for David's interests, counselled Absalom to wait till he himself had a very large army, for David's prowess in warfare was well known. Then Hushai sent secret messengers to David, who was encamped in the plain of the Jordan, urging him to cross the Jordan. David advanced to Mahanaim, where the East Jordan tribe rallied to his support. Absalom adopted Hushai's plan, thinking to add to his glory by a magnificent attack, and Ahithophel, realizing that Absalom thereby lost his golden opportunity, committed suicide rather than suffer the results to himself of his treachery to King David.

When Absalom had mustered a large force he crossed the Jordan to make the attack. David sent his forces under the generalship of Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, first charging them to deal gently with Absalom. A bloody battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. Absalom was caught by his head as he rode his mule under a great oak, and his plight was reported to Joab. Unmindful of David's command to spare Absalom, for he well knew that David would not deal with him as he deserved and only by his death would David's kingdom be secured, Joab thrust three darts through Absalom's heart as he hung there helpless. Young men gathered round and slew him, and then cast his mutilated body into a great pit and threw stones upon it.

Absalom's death ended the rebellion. There remained only the sending of the news to David. Ahimaaz the son of Zadok wished to carry it, but Joab told him that the news of Absalom's death would be no welcome news, and sent a certain Cushite instead. Ahimaaz persisted in his request and was allowed to go. He outran the Cushite and reached David first. The time is a few weeks after last Sunday's lesson.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Young People. When Samuel was a twelve year old lad, you remember, he received a message from God telling him that Eli's sons were very wicked, and because he had failed to restrain them, he and his house should be punished. How did Eli receive the message? "It is Jehovah, let Him do what seemeth Him good," he said submissively. He had been very weak in his treatment of Hophni and Phinehas, his sons, and perhaps then it was too late for him to have any influence over them. Then you remember that later a great battle was fought with the Philistines, and the Israelites took the ark of God into battle with them; the aged Eli sat by the wayside, perhaps by the city gate of Shiloh, watching and waiting anxiously for news from the battlefield. There came a man running with tidings that the Israelites had been sadly defeated. What happened to Eli when he learned that the ark was captured and his wicked sons were slain?

To-day we see another aged father sitting by a city gateway, waiting for news from another battle-field. There is a watchman on the roof overhead, who is gazing intently westward, and as soon as he sees a figure in the far distance he announces that a runner is coming with news. The father's heart is filled with anxiety for the safety of his wicked son, and he seems to have forgotten his own interests and that of his kingdom.

For Older Pupils. In the valley of the Kidron southeast of Jerusalem there is to-day a stone monument forty feet high which the Jews call the Tomb

So-called Absalom's Monument

of Absalom. Its sides are buried in stones, for no Jew, it is said, ever passes it, without throwing a stone against it and exclaiming, "Cursed be the memory of Absalom, and cursed be every child who rises up in rebellion against his parents." It is probable that this monument stands where stood the pillar that Absalom reared for himself in his life time, on whose summit, according to Josephus, a hand was raised as symbol of power and victory. How are the mighty fallen! A lonely cairn somewhere in a wild forest was his real monument, and the stones were thrown there over his body as if to mete out to him, no doubt, the punishment of stoning due to rebellious sons.

We left Absalom in last Sunday's lesson at Hebron, his "conspiracy strong, for the people increased continually with him."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Is the Young Man Safe?

Where is my Wandering Boy? Is the young man Absalom safe? was the question uppermost in David's heart. He was the father rather than the king, the father who forgave his son's wickedness, who loved him still just as every true father still loves his own son, prodigal though he be.

How often has been the anxious thought of millions of fathers and mothers since — Is the young man safe? The young man himself seldom realizes in the slightest degree the suffering he needlessly causes his parents. A true story in the *Union Gospel News* tells how the fact was brought home to one young man's consciousness. It is a long story, and must be greatly condensed here.

He was a civil engineer in western Kentucky, and traveled with his father as a surveyor for a new railroad. For two years he had been drinking heavily, at times, but had managed to conceal the fact from his parents. One Thursday his work was interrupted for a few days, and he started homeward, but instead of going to his home went to a saloon for a three days' spree. His father returned on Saturday to find that Harry was not there. A policeman was sent in search of him, and found him at the saloon keeper's place. His poor mother was informed that "he would be all right to-morrow morning" and she would better not see him till he had "sobered up." Sunday evening she had agreed to sing a solo in the church choir, and the song expected was, *Where is my Wandering Boy To-night?* Could she sing it with her heart breaking with grief over her own wandering boy?

The father had engaged an attendant to take care of the boy, and as he be-

gan to come to himself he was told that his father and mother knew of his plight. The knowledge cut him to the heart and helped sober him. When the church bells rang, though he was in his working clothes, he suddenly determined to go to church, and as his attendant could not dissuade him, they went together, taking a place in a secluded corner not far from the pulpit and the organ. After the sermon the mother, not knowing her son was present, bravely rose and sang out of her own soul's distress:

"Oh, where is my wandering boy to-night,
The child of my love and care?"

The audience marvelled at the feeling in her song; one heart alone understood. She sang the last stanza:

"Go for my wandering boy to-night,
Go search for him where you will,
But bring him to me with all his blight,
And tell him I love him still.
Oh, where is my wandering boy?"

when a young man in woolen shirt and corduroy trousers rushed up the choir stairs with outstretched arms, sobbing like a child, and exclaimed: "Here I am, mother!" She hastened to meet him, and they clasped each other in their arms, forgetful of the audience, forgetful of everything save each other. The organist grasped the meaning of the scene, and quickly pulling out all his stops played "Old Hundred"—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and the congregation joined in the great doxology while the pastor and friends surrounded the returned prodigal. His wanderings ended then and there: that moment was for him a consecration of all his future life to upright living and Christian usefulness.

The Peril of a Homeless Home. The great and overshadowing peril of a boy's life is not, as many suppose, his bad companions, or his bad books, or a bad habit, it is the peril of homelessness. I do not mean merely homelessness in the sense of having no bed or room which can be called one's own, but that homelessness which may exist even in luxurious houses — the isolation of the boy's soul, the lack of any one to listen to him, the loss of roots to hold him to his place and make him grow. This is what drives the boy into the arms of evil, and makes the streets his home and the gang his family, or else drives him in upon himself, into uncommunicated imaginings and desires. It is the modern story of the man whose house was "empty," and precisely because it was empty there entered "seven devils" to keep him company. If there is one thing that a boy can not bear, it is himself. He is, by nature, a gregarious animal, and if the group which nature gives him is denied, then he gives himself to any group that may select him. A boy, like all things in nature, abhors a vacuum, and if his home is a vacuum of loneliness and homelessness, then he abhors his home. *Francis G. Peabody.*

How a Young Man may be Safe. Jesus Christ, that young man who knew young men, said a young man may do what he pleases. He said to Peter: "Simon, to-day you can follow Me or not; you can feed My lambs or not; by and by it will be different." You are free to-day. You young men are not even committed to any profession, or if you are you can easily shift it off. I have chosen and can not change. When you put the seed underground and it gets to be along in September you must abide the harvest, but in March you can put in any seed that you please. Young men, you have your

life before you with all its glorious opportunities. Be sure you choose rightly. Take a grip upon manhood, modest, heroic, and being great enough to do that, settle firmly back. A Christian is Christ's knight. As He believes, I will believe; what He demands, I will do; what He promises, I will trust. I pledge myself to this and with this I begin, and I will go on to the end. *Alexander Mackenzie,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

II Inconsiderate Grief

Joab's Rebuke of King David. David turned the victory that day into mourning. In his great grief for his son he forgot all about the thousands of brave soldiers who lost their lives fighting for his cause on the field of battle, a greater number than had been slain in any battle since the disastrous defeat on Mt. Gilboa.

While he was shut up in the room over the gate, weeping and calling out Absalom's name, the returning warriors, who deserved to be royally welcomed for their bravery in the battle, were coming into the city "by stealth, as people that are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle." David had no thought for them nor for his kingdom that they had saved for him. Then Joab his general came and told him how selfish was his grief. He spoke very plain words to his king. "Thou lovest them that hate thee (referring to Absalom), and hatest them that love thee. For thou hast declared this day, that princes and servants are nought unto thee, for this day I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well." Then at Joab's persistent advice King David arose and went down to the gate, there to "speak comfortably" to his people as was their due.

Remember the Living. When James M. Barrie was a small lad an older brother died who was his mother's favorite son. Her grief was very great; day after day she sat in her rooms and wept, and was not willing to see any one. Just at dusk one day James went into the room and his mother said, "Is it you?" The lonely little lad thought she was calling for his brother, and with a sob he said, "No, Mother, it's only Jamie." "Only Jamie!" the words rebuked the mother's heart, and as she put her arms around him she realized that in her great sorrow for the dead boy she was forgetting the living son who needed her love and care.

"I've always wanted to write a happy, genial book, but the devil of sadness is forever in my inkstand, and I can not!" once said Nathaniel Hawthorne. Perhaps we should have had the happy, genial book from his pen had it not been for the influence upon his sensitive nature of the sadness that prevailed in his early home life. His father died when he was a lad, and his mother gave herself unreservedly to her grief. For the remainder of her life, a period of thirty years, she shut herself up in her own room as much as she could, and refused to have anything to do with the outside world. Her gifted son idolized her, and who can estimate her influence in creating the demon of sadness that dwelt in his inkstand?

Trust God even in Deepest Sorrow. Eyes are of no service in the dark; we must trust other guides. There are times of black sorrow in our lives when we can not see. There is no gain in trying to see just then,—we may be hurt if we trust to our sight. We can only throw ourselves helplessly, unseeing, upon the love of the Father. He is love. We do not see how He is,

Our love would never have sent to a loved one the agony He is sending to us. But He is love. Then why did He do this? We do not know to-day, but we can pray, "Father, keep me in Thy love, even through this!" He has never failed to answer that prayer. *Editorial in Sunday School Times.*

III Sorrow's Use

It may ennoble the Spirit. Take the man whose life has known bereavement, who has passed sometime through those days and nights which come up to so many of you as I say the old word, death. Days and nights when he watched the slow untwisting of some silver cord on which his very life was hung, or suddenly felt the golden bowl dashed down and broken of which his very life had drunk. The first shock became dulled. The first agony grew calm, the lips subsided into serenity. But was there not something in him that made him greater and purer and richer than of old; something that let any one see who watched the change that it was "better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?" A whole new quality, that rich quality which the Bible calls by its large word "patience," the power of his trial, was in his new serenity, until he died. *Phillips Brooks, Sermons.*

It may bring One nearer to God. Do we bury under the turf the darling of our crib, or the sweet-voiced wife that filled home with heart melodies, or the dear old mother whose arm-chair was next in sacredness to our family altar? Then our thoughts fasten more closely on that homestead beyond the clouds into which the spoiler never enters. The unseen things become visible. Christ becomes nearer and infinitely dearer. Prayer takes stronger hold on the promises. Faith has a clearer vision; and life becomes more disentangled from the harassing worries and absorptions of worldliness. *Theodore L. Cuyler.*

It may teach us Sympathy. The Spaniards have a saying that there is no home without its "hush." Sooner or later there comes to every home the hush of bereavement; the whole world, with all its gaieties and pleasures, seems filled with sorrowing ones who need the sympathy of those who know what they are suffering. Sympathy, in its original derivation, means, "to suffer with." One can not suffer with others unless he himself knows what suffering means. The rich can not fully sympathize with the poor, for they can not fully understand what it means to be poor. The strong can not fully sympathize with the weak, for they can not put themselves in the place of the sufferers and know what they are enduring. The power of sympathy comes only through suffering. For this power Will Carleton in one of his poems has a stanza of gratitude, ranking it with God's other blessings:

"We thank Thee, O Father of all, for the power
Of aiding each other in life's darkest hour.
The generous heart and the bountiful hand,
And all the soul-help that sad hearts understand."

It may lead to Deeds of Loving Kindness to Others. Have you ever read Jean Ingelow's true story entitled *The Candle by the Sea?* It is a pathetic account of the life of a fisherman's daughter. His hut was on a dangerous part of the English coast, and one wild March night he failed to return from his fishing trip. In the morning his body was found washed ashore where his boat had gone to pieces on the rocks, half a mile away from his cottage. Every night after that, for fifty long years, his lonely daughter kept a lighted candle

in the window as a beacon light for other fishermen. She sat by it all night and kept it trimmed and burning brightly, and she spun yarn to earn money with which to buy her food and candles. Then every day she slept. Thus through all those long years she turned night into day, and lived her lonely life with never a thought of recompense, content that she was doing it in her father's memory, and that she was saving the lives of so many others. One reads with amazement about such a life of self-denial for others, but something of her spirit should be in the heart of every one who cherishes the memory of a loved one who has died. The loving services which you can no longer render him, may be given to others who need them.

SENTENCE SERMONS

The best safeguard of a young man is a perfectly open and affectionate relation to his parents. *Le Baron R. Briggs.*

As the pupil of the eye dilates in the night until it finds day in it, so the soul dilates in sorrow until it finds God in it. *Victor Hugo.*

'Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder up,
Whose golden rounds are our calamities,
Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer God
The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed. *James Russell Lowell.*

You are nearer Heaven for the graves you have dug if you have accepted bereavements in the right spirit. *Joseph Parker.*

The introspective and self-absorbed sorrow grows heavier the longer you watch it, and the self-forgetting service of another lightens the burden which you yourself have to bear. *F. G. Peabody.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

The way of the transgressor is hard. Prov. 13. 15.

The wages of sin is death. Rom. 6. 23.

What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? Matt. 16. 26.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like
Unto my sorrow. Lam. 1. 12.

And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more. Rev. 21. 4.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Absalom made a complete failure of his life, and yet he started out with the fairest of prospects, endowed with rare personal gifts of beauty and graciousness of manner, and blessed with popularity and wealth. His vanity, his selfish ambition, his lack of filial regard for his father, wrought his ruin. No worldly advantages will assure success in this life; no one can lead an evil life here and win life eternal.

Absalom was well pleased when Ahithophel planned to take the life of his father, but David was plunged into the depths of grief when his son was

slain. A father still loves his child, no matter how wayward and wicked he has become. Our earthly father's love tells us of our heavenly Father's love and mercy. God is love.

Is the young man Absalom safe? cries David in an agony of anxiety. Am I in any way needlessly causing my father uneasiness if not anxiety?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

In the early morning David had taken his place in the gateway of the city, and watched his troops march forth to meet his son's troops in battle. All day long he had sat there awaiting the result. His throne, his kingdom, the villainy of his son, were all forgotten in his anxiety for the safety of Absalom. Above on the roof over the gateway, a watchman was stationed. Toward night he called down to the king that a runner was coming. If alone, the king said, he was a messenger with tidings of the battle, for a fugitive would be accompanied by many others. Another runner was seen in the far distance. The watchman's sharp eyes then announced that the running of the first one seemed like that of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest. Joab would not send so distinguished a messenger with bad news, the king thinks. "All is well," called out Ahimaaz from afar, and then when he reached the king's presence he made obeisance and continued: "Blessed be Jehovah who hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king." David scarcely heard and in no way heeded his words. "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" was the only news he cared now to hear. Eager as Ahimaaz had been to be the first to bring the tidings, he was loth now to answer the king. There was a tumult when he left, he said, but he knew not what it meant. "Stand aside," said the king, as the second runner, the Cushite, appeared. "Jehovah hath avenged thee this day," exclaimed the Cushite, but David only questioned again, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" Then he learned the truth, Absalom was slain. Like David we forget the treason and rebellion of Absalom as we see his father with an exceeding bitter pathetic cry, go up to the chamber over the gate to mourn for his son. "O my son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. A comparison of Ahithophel's and Judas' course.
2. David's grief and Joab's rebuke.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Commit the Psalm to memory. 2. Under what figure is God first spoken of? 3. In what lesson was David spoken of as the shepherd of his people? Sept. 13. 4. In verse 4, to what does the figure change? 5. Does "I shall not want" mean that one who trusts God will never suffer deprivations? How do Paul's words in Phil. 4. 11, 12 explain its meaning? 6. On what occasion did Jesus rebuke His host for not anointing Him? (Luke 7. 46.) 7. Compare this Psalm with Psalm 27. 8. Review the lesson about Jesus the Good Shepherd. 9. Tell Jesus' parable of the lost sheep. (Luke 13.3–7.)

THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD

Psalm 23. (Read John 1, 1–18.) Commit the entire Psalm.

Golden Text

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23. 1.

LESSON TEXT Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The Lord.* R. V., *Jehovah. I shall not want.* Because the divine Shepherd, like the human shepherd, cares for the needs of His flock.

2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.* In the noonday heat; see Song of Solomon 1. 7. *The still waters.* R. V., *still waters.* R .V., margin, *waters of rest.*

3. *He restoreth my soul.* See Psalm 19. 7. *He leadeth.* R. V., *he guideth. In the paths of righteousness.* "This phrase does not mean 'straight paths,' but retains its moral significance. The natural and the spiritual, the symbol and the symbolized, are blended in the Psalm, as usually in Hebrew poetry." *Davison.* See Psalms 4. 11; 12. 28. *For his name's sake.* "God does many things that He may be true to His own character, and because He can not deny Himself." *Davison.* See 1 Sam. 12. 22; Psalm 106. 8; 1 John 2. 12.

4. *The valley of the shadow of death.* Compare Jer. 2. 6, where the same word is used. "The word *tsalmaveth,* translated 'valley of the shadow of death,' is only in appearance derived from the word *death;* etymologically it means no more than the R. V. margin, *deep darkness.* The familiar rendering, however, is not only picturesque but has interwoven itself in our language; none the less, it is somewhat to be regretted that the narrower meaning which associates the gloomy and dangerous ravine with death should exclusively prevail, and it would be well to keep as an alternative translation 'the valley of the dark shadow.'" *Davison. Comfort me.* Give me a feeling of security in Thy presence.

5. The figure of the shepherd changes to that of the host. *In the presence of mine enemies.* "His enemies must look on, without being able to offer any

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

opposition, and see how sumptuously Jehovah provides for His guest." *Delitzsch. Anoints.* R. V., *hast anointed.* The Psalmist represents himself as treated like an honored guest by Jehovah.

6. *Mercy.* R. V., *lovingkindness. Goodness* and *mercy* are here personified. *The house of the Lord.* It has been thought by some scholars that this implies the existence of the temple, and therefore the Psalm could not have been written by David. The language is figurative, and it is not necessary to refer it to the temple.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. *He leadeth me beside still waters.*

But One, but One,— ah, child most dear,
And perfect image of the Love Unseen,—
Walked every day in pastures green,
And all His life the quiet waters by,
Reading their beauty with a tranquil eye,
To Him the desert was a place prepared
For weary hearts to rest;
The hillside was a temple blest:
The grassy vale a banquet room
Where He could feed and comfort many a guest.

Henry van Dyke, God of the Open Air.

3. *He restoreth my soul.* The most fruitful source of spiritual declension is the neglect of the Word of God and of private devotion. Just so long as the spirit of man keeps on terms of intimacy with the loving spirit of God, whilst the Bible is regularly and prayerfully studied, and the habit of retirement is maintained, there will be a regular growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God. And yet the chapters of the Word of God are skimmed as a duty, whilst the morning or evening prayer is uttered so coldly and perfunctorily, that it would almost better have been unsaid. Is it then, any wonder that the energies of the spiritual life decline, and sadly need the interposition of some strong, wise hand to restore?

Nature is full of great restorative processes. As soon as a rent is made in her hillsides she begins to festoon it with grasses, ferns, and creepers. When a wound is caused in our flesh, and the red blood breaks through the broken rampart as it passes, it begins to build up the breach, so that presently soundness takes the place of the lacerated aperture. So, spiritually, the blessed Spirit of God is ever brooding over human hearts to do His choice and beloved work of reparation and restoration. *F. B. Meyer, The Shepherd Psalm.*

6. *Goodness and mercy shall pursue me.* God's love is earnest, as earnest as the deadly battle-hate — for the Hebrew word means that. He pursues us with the zeal of a foe, and the love of a Father; pursues us "throughout the length of days" with a divine impatience that is never faint and never weary. He is not content to follow us; He pursues because He means to find us. Behind the loneliest man is a lovely apparition, nay, no apparition, but angels twain, Goodness and Mercy, shielding and urging him on.

But His quest of us must be answered by our quest of Him. "Let us follow on," says the prophet of God's love "to know the Lord"; let us pursue — for that is the word here, too. Would we be truly Godlike we must pursue as

He pursues, following in the footsteps of Christ, till at last He sets us at God's right hand. He in quest of us and we of Him, shall surely find each other. *John Edgar McFadyen, The Divine Pursuit.*

6. *I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever.*

"Beneath me: green pastures. Before me: a table.
Beside me: still waters. Around me: mine enemies.
With me: my Shepherd. After me: goodness and mercy.
Beyond me: the house of the Lord."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *I shall not want.* In ordinary circumstances the shepherd does not feed his flock, except by leading and guiding them where they may gather for themselves; but there are times when it is otherwise. Late in autumn, when the pastures are dried up, and in winter, in places covered with snow, he must furnish them food or they die. In the vast oak woods along the eastern sides of Lebanon, there are gathered innumerable flocks, and the shepherds are all day long in the bushy trees, cutting down the branches, upon whose green leaves and tender twigs the sheep and goats are entirely supported. The same is true in all mountain districts, and large forests are preserved for the purpose. *W. M. Thomson, The Land and the Book.*

2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.* Throughout the hotter months the sheep are taken to some shady spot to rest during the middle of the day. A grove of trees, the shadow of an overhanging rock, a cave, a ruin — all are utilized for this purpose. From time immemorial the shepherds in Palestine have done this; and the practice is referred to in the words of the Bride (Cant. 1.7): "Tell me where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." *C. T. Wilson, Peasant Life in the Holy Land.*

3. *He restoreth my soul.* Eastern travelers tell us that the shepherd is much occupied with the straying sheep. Only a few keep near him: the majority run from bush to bush, jump into neighboring fields, climb into leaning trees from which they fall and break their limbs, or wander great distances and get lost among the mountain defiles; so that much of the shepherd's time and care are consumed in seeking and restoring these wanderers. Similarly, it is true, that restoration occupies a prominent place in God's economy; indeed it is essentially an economy of restoration. *M. R. Vincent.*

4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.* The figure — a very familiar one to the dweller amid the fastnesses of Judea, and one which must have stamped itself with indelible force upon the mind of David, the whole of whose earlier life was passed amongst such surroundings — is that of a dark, rocky defile, where the path narrows, the cliffs tower overhead, and where the trembling sheep lost upon the mountains are peculiarly exposed to the assaults of enemies. David is by a bold and beautiful metaphor expressing his confidence in Jehovah's protection in every time of danger. *James Neil, Palestine Explored.*

4. *Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* The Syrian shepherd has two implements of his calling, neither of which is wanting when he is on full duty. His dress consists of an unbleached calico shirt, gathered in at the waist by a strong, red leather belt. Hung to the belt, the "leathern girdle" of Scripture, besides his rude clasp-knife and small leather pouch, or "scrip," is a formida-

ble weapon of defense, a stout bludgeon now called in Arabic *naboot,* used to protect himself and his charge from assailants. It is generally made of a species of oak, is about two feet long, and often has a large number of heavy iron nails driven into its rounded head, which render it a very deadly arm. Sometimes it is fashioned from a species of willow which is peculiarly light, and at the same time exceedingly tough and strong. The club is easily attached to the belt, being furnished with a noose of cord passed through a hole in the end by which it is grasped.

The staff is generally a straight, strong rod. Its use answers to the English shepherd's crook, to guide the sheep, to recover them from danger, to rule the stragglers into order, and at times to chastise the wilful.

Thy club and Thy staff, they comfort me. Jehovah's club, that is, His arm of power, will battle down every foe. He guides us by the way, helps our infirmities, chastens us when we wander, rescues us from peril, and leads us back into the "paths of righteousness." O Thou Good Shepherd! "Thy club and Thy staff."—Thy power and goodness, Thy might and mercy, both alike necessary for my preservation in this wilderness—"they comfort me!" *James Neil, Palestine Explored.*

Shepherd with Club and Staff

The shepherd's rod was the staff of authority. It is seen in the sculptures of Assyrian and Egyptian kings, and was the original of the military mace and the baton and truncheon of office. *Hasting's Dictionary.*

5. *Thou anointest my head with oil.* Anointing was an ancient custom practised by the Egyptians, and afterwards by the Greeks and Romans and other nations. Olive oil was used, either pure or mixed with fragrant and costly spices, often brought from a long distance. The practice was in use, not only as a part of the ceremony in connection with the coronation of kings, and at the installation of the high priest, but as an act of courtesy and hospitality towards a guest. *Freeman.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is usually assumed that this Psalm was composed by David when an old man, at least after he was especially interested in "the house of the Lord." His meditation on God's goodness and care is colored throughout by his rec-

ollections of his life as a shepherd-lad. In verse 5 some see a reference to his entertainment by Barzillai when he fled from Absalom.

There is no special story from David's life, but there are historical associations innumerable connected with the Psalm. Dr. Henry Ward Beecher says of its influence: "It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has remanded to their dungeon more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows, than there are sands on the sea-shore. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master — nor is its work done. It will go singing to your children and my children, and to their children, through all the generations of time."

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Who will tell me the parable which we studied last April about Jesus the Good Shepherd? Who were the sheep? Who was the Door for the sheep? Who was the Good Shepherd? What did He say about knowing His sheep? What did He do for His sheep? About a thousand years before Jesus spoke His parable to the Jews in Jerusalem, a beautiful poem which we call the Shepherd Psalm was composed probably in the same city, by a king who had himself been a shepherd in his youth. Who was he? In this Psalm who is the Shepherd? Jesus knew this earlier Psalm. "I am the Good Shepherd," He said. "The Lord is my Shepherd," David said. "I and the Father are one," Jesus told us; the Lord is our shepherd and Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

When Robert Louis Stevenson was a little boy not yet seven years old he knew and loved this Psalm, and he would go to sleep at night thinking over the pictures which it always brought to him.

> In pastures green Thou leadest me
> The quiet waters by,

was his favorite verse, and he always thought of himself as the sheep, and of a certain field in the country where his nurse had once taken him to walk, as the pastures green. He seemed to himself to be following some one whom he could not see but who was very kind.

In connection with the fourth verse tell your pupils this picture of Stevenson's. "Death's dark vale" was to him a certain archway in the cemetery. Here he saw himself, a sheep, all alone; "On one side of me," he says, "a rude, knobby shepherd's staff, on the other a rod like a billiard cue, appeared to accompany my progress; the staff sturdily upright, the billiard cue inclined confidentially, like one whispering, towards my ear. I was aware — I will never tell you how — that the presence of these articles offered me encouragement."

For Older Pupils. "Have you ever seen, or perhaps made one of, a party of people who are going to explore some deep, dark cavern,— Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, or the Catacombs of Rome? They all stand out in the sunlight, and the attendants, who know the journey they are going to make, pass round among them and put into the hands of each a lighted candle. How useless it seems! How pale and colorless the little flame appears in the gorgeous flood of sunlight! But the procession moves along. One after another enters the

dark cavern's mouth. One after another loses the splendor of daylight. In the hands of one after another the feeble candle-light comes out bright in the darkness, and by and by they are walking in the dark, holding fast their candles as if they were their very life; totally dependent now on what seemed so useless half an hour ago. That seems to me to be a picture of the way in which God's promises of consolation, which we attach but very little meaning to at first, come out into beauty and value as we pass on into our lives."

By this simple comparison Bishop Phillips Brooks has beautifully expressed the thought that however bravely each youth starts out to live his life, however auspicious may seem his prospects, there comes inevitably the time when he needs to know God as the God of consolation.

Robert Louis Stevenson tells us that the 23d Psalm was "a scarce conscious joy" to him in his youth, but "a companion thought" in his later life.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I SHALL NOT WANT

Be not Anxious. Dr. Livingston said that the Africans are sometimes afflicted by a peculiar disorder which causes them, in passing over a straw, to lift up their foot as if they were passing over the trunk of a tree. What multitudes of Christian people there are who by worrying make trunks of trees out of straws of troubles!

Some of your hurts you have cured,
And the sharpest you still have survived;
But what torments of grief you endured
From evils which never arrived!

is Emerson's familiar translation of a French stanza.

A Christian is a follower of Christ. Christ taught that faith in a wise and mighty Father, whose love is equal to His power, would free one from all anxiety. The Psalmist says, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. We know that Christ was often tired and hungry and thirsty, but we never hear of His being worried or anxious or fretful. He trusted His Father, and His heart was always serene and peaceful. There ought not to be a worrying Christian; anxiety should have no place in a Christian's life. "Let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me," were the words of Christ's farewell discourse to His disciples, which we studied a few months ago.

The Meaning of "I shall not want." I may not possess all that I wish for, but "I shall not want." Others far wealthier and wiser than I, may want, but "I shall not." "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." It is not only "I do not want," but "I shall not want." Come what may, if famine should devastate the land, or calamity destroy the city, "I shall not want." Old age with its feebleness shall not bring me any lack, and even death with its gloom shall not find me destitute. I have all things and abound; not because I have a good store of money in the bank, not because I have skill and wit with which to win my bread, but because "The Lord is my Shepherd." The wicked always want, but the righteous never; a sinner's heart is far from satisfaction; but a gracious spirit dwells in the palace of content. *C. H. Spurgeon.*

Paul Gerhardt's Experience. Last year the three hundredth anniversary

of the birth of Paul Gerhardt was celebrated in Germany with great enthusiasm. He was "the prince of German hymn writers," his hymns all grew out of his own feelings and experiences, and are remarkable for their simple but sublime faith in God. In 1666 Gerhardt was deposed from his church in Berlin and ordered to leave the country because of his zeal for the Reformed faith. So poor was he that he and his wife were obliged to start forth on foot. After traveling several days, his noble-hearted wife, footsore and weary and faint, gave way to her fears and discouragement. In vain Gerhardt tried to comfort her. "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass," he said, but she continued to weep bitterly. Gerhardt left her and after seeking strength on his knees from God in prayer, he felt calm and reassured. He sat down and wrote his hymn beginning

Commit all thy griefs
And ways into His hands,

and returned to her. Just then two men called for him. "Some new persecution is in store for us," his wife thought, but they were messengers from Duke Christian, sent to express his sympathy with Gerhardt in his persecutions, and to invite him to the Duke's city! Joyfully the good man told the news to his wife as he threw his hymn into her lap, and added: "See how God provides: did not I tell you God would provide; did I not tell you to trust in Him and all would be well?"

II Trust that casteth out Fear

Thou art with me. The strength and joy of David's life came from his perfect trust in God. In his earlier years he had very few comforts and many great deprivations, but his trust in God never failed him, he was content, he did not want. What is it to trust in God? Trust has been defined as "That act and habit of the mind by which the truth of God is brought in and made a part of our very being; the act and habit of the mind, the heart, the soul, by which the facts concerning God are made realities." God was an ever-present reality to David. His mind was kept in perfect peace, because it was stayed on God. How strong and beautiful is the trust that gleams in every stanza of this twenty-third Psalm! Blessed is he who in the hour of great need can appropriate by faith the words of King David, "yea, though I walk through the valley of deep darkness, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."

I will fear No Evil. Observe that the Psalmist does not say that no evil will ever come to him. For he knows well enough that there are many grievous things in life, and hard to bear. There are perils and pains and persecutions; there are sharp conflicts and sore wounds; and at the last there is a shadowed valley where each one of us must receive the mortal thrust. We can not get through these things without suffering. But do we not know that infinitely more suffering is caused by needless fear than by actual disaster? Do we not know that more than half our trouble is borrowed? Just suppose we could get rid of all unnecessary and previous terror; just suppose that we could be sure of final victory in every conflict, and final emergence out of every shadow into brighter day; how our hearts would be lightened, how much more bravely we should work and fight and march forward! This is the courage to which we are entitled and which we may find in the thought that God is with us everywhere. He will not let any one destroy us. We may be hurt,

but we can never be harmed. The course of our journey has been appointed by Him, He knows the way even through the darkness, and its goal is in His bosom. Be of good cheer, your Shepherd has overcome the world. *Henry van Dyke, The Story of the Psalms.*

How to gain Trust. There will always be troubles and necessities and temptations about us, and these will upset us and torment us greatly. But in the heart, at the real, deep foundation of our being, if we only trust God there can be great calm. We can gain this in several ways. (1) By thinking of God instinctively when any trouble comes, and crying from the heart to Him. If the wicked man in his moments of excitement takes God's name upon his lips (we call it swearing, but it is really the weakness of the man asserting its need, terrible though the thoughtless cry is), how much more should we. (2) By instinctively saying to ourselves, "God is my Father; He will care for me." That dear phrase, "Your Father knoweth" (Matt. 6. 32), has greatly comforted me. I love to keep it hanging in my room where I can always see it. (3) By remembering that these experiences are tests to make us stronger and to teach us self-control. *Floyd W. Tomkins, Beacons on Life's Voyage.*

III The Royal Bounty

God's Way. We rejoice continually in His bountiful goodness. What is the need of flowers? He could have made a strong and honest earth which would take in the seed and give it out in harvest, and thus we could live; but when He made the earth substantial, useful as it is, He added flowers because He wished to give them, and knew how happy we should be who saw them blossom by the roadside.

My cup runneth over. This seems unnecessary. To have the cup full, or a little less than full, is enough for us, and more convenient for us, but not for God, who delights in filling it; and when we bid Him stay His hand He keeps on pouring, and the water flows, till presently the cup is overflowing, not because we thought to have it so, but because of His great delight in giving; until it would seem as if He could not stop, or content Himself with that which He has already bestowed upon us. Let this stand as a simple expression of His way with us.

It is because our prayers are too narrow, because we only want to fill the cup up within an inch of the top, that we are poor; when we are willing that the cup shall run over, there comes a springing out from Heaven, a pouring down from above of that which fills the cup from the great wealth and mercy of our God. *Alexander McKenzie.*

Recognizing God's Bounty. "I had a remarkable preservation to-day," said one minister to another at a clerical gathering, "my horse stumbled and it was by a special providence that I was not killed on the spot." The other minister replied, "I have still more reason to be thankful, for my horse never stumbled at all." How many of us awake in the morning after riding all night in a sleeping-car, and specially render thanks that the train did not shoot the track during the hours of darkness? But if the train had actually been pitched down an embankment, and we had escaped unhurt, we should throw ourselves down on our knees and pour out our thanks to God for a wonderful preservation. I suspect that when God said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me," He had reference to the habitually thankful souls who recognize His

loving kindness in every hour and under every kind of providence. *Cuyler.*

Our Responsibility. God fills the cup, but have we no responsibility in regard to it? Must we not keep our cup turned upward? Suppose the flowers turned their cups downward, when the dew or rain falls, instead of allowing the drops to collect in them and then slowly trickle down to their roots, what would be the result? Soon we should find them withered and dead. God gives to him that asketh.

Suppose we grumble because some one has a larger and handsomer cup than we have, or suppose we throw our cup down in disappointment because, though it is full, we would prefer to have it filled with something else, do we deserve another one? Contentment comes through the grateful use and enjoyment of what we have. "Do not let the empty cup be your first teacher of the blessings you had when it was full;" counsels Dr. Maclaren. "Seek to cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindnesses of God in your daily life."

SENTENCE SERMONS

In my own hands my want and weakness are,
My strength, O God, is Thine! *Bayard Taylor.*

If you want to be gloomy, there's gloom enough to keep you glum; if you want to be glad, there's gleam enough to keep you glad. *M. D. Babcock.*

For the most part, our distress, our poverty, our carking care, comes, not from the smallness of our provisions, but from the largeness of our pampered desires: we are afraid that we shall not always have cake, and so we forget that God has promised His children shall not lack bread. *Henry van Dyke.*

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety. *George Müller.*

Let nothing distress thee,
Nothing affright thee,
All things are passing;
God never changeth. *Longfellow.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matt. 11. 28.

My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4. 19.

I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. John 6. 35.

The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be my shepherd, and shall guide them into fountains of waters of life. Rev. 7. 17.

I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. Phil. 4. 11, 12.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

The Psalm does not say, the Lord is the Shepherd of the world; it says,

The Lord is my Shepherd. The Lord is *my* Shepherd; he maketh *me* to lie down; he leadeth *me,* he restoreth *my* soul, he guideth *me;* can I say those words with my heart as well as my lips?

God is the Shepherd, ready with His loving care for His flock, but do I belong to His fold?

The Psalmist knew that life is not all resting in green pastures beside still waters, but whether there or in the dark, gloomy defiles, he was very sure of God. Thou art with me.

How much more this psalm means to us than it could mean to the Psalmist! For since Jesus came, we have seen the Good Shepherd become flesh, and take His place beside us to watch and guide and feed His silly sheep. It is said that in inscriptions discovered in the East, one sometimes finds an Old Testament text quoted in Greek, with the name of Christ substituted for Jehovah. And surely this is right; for the Lord of the Old Testament is the Lord of the New, and the Lord of the New Testament is Christ. *John E. McFadyen.*

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

In words of wonderful beauty and depth of feeling, the Psalmist portrays his perfect trust in God's loving care. God is his Shepherd, who provides for every want of His sheep, causing him to rest in the noon-day heat in green pastures by quiet waters, guiding him in right paths, and even in the gloomiest defiles, dark as the grave, assuring him of safety. God is the generous host who spreads for him a royal banquet, hospitably anoints his head with the oil of gladness, fills his cup to overflowing. Goodness and mercy shall follow his steps, and he shall enjoy communion with his heavenly Father for ever. The peace of God which passeth understanding is his.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Green pastures and still waters.
2. Consciousness of God's presence.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What promise had been made to David concerning his successor? (See lesson for Oct. 11.) 2. Was the wish expressed in verse 37 fulfilled. (1 Kings 19. 14–29; 2 Chron. 9. 13–28.) 3. What was the highest mark of honor that the king of Persia could bestow on Mordecai? (Esth. 6. 9.) 4. How did Pharaoh honor Joseph before the people? (Gen. 41. 43.) 5. From what "tent" was the anointing oil probably taken? (2 Sam. 6. 17.) 6. Twice in the history of Jerusalem a son of David rode through its streets, sitting on ass or mule, and followed by the shouts of the people. When was the other occasion? (Matt. 21. 1–11.) 7. Read Psalm 72, entitled "The Reign of the Righteous King. A Psalm of Solomon." 8. For what purpose were cities of refuge appointed? (Josh. 20.) 9. What directions are given in Ex. 27. 2 for making the horns of the altar? 10. What do Solomon's words in verse 52 mean? Compare 1 Sam. 14. 45; 2 Sam. 14. 11; Acts 27. 34. 11. How did Adonijah meet his death? (2 Kings 2. 13–25.)

LESSON VIII — NOVEMBER 22

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING

1 Kings 1. 32–40, 50–53. (Read 1 Kings 1. 1–2. 12.) Commit vv. 39, 40.

Golden Text

Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. I Chron. 28. 9.

LESSON TEXT 1 Kings 1. 32–40, 50–53

32 And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.
33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon:
34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him their king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.
35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.
36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so *too*.
37 As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.
38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.
39 And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.
40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.
50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went and caught hold on the horns of the altar.
51 And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.
52 And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.
53 So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon; and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

32. *Call me.* R. V., *call to me. Benaiah.* The captain of the body-guard.

33. *The servants of your lord.* His body-guard.

34. *Blow with.* R. V., *blow. God save King Solomon.* R. V., *Long live King Solomon.*

35. *Ye shall come up after him.* Follow as his body-guard. *That he may come.* R. V., *and he shall come. Ruler.* R. V., *prince. Over Israel and Judah.* Perhaps mentioned because David had ruled at first over Judah alone.

36. *Amen.* "So let it be." *The God of my Lord the King, say so, too.* "The true text is perhaps preserved in the Septuagint: 'May Jehovah confirm the words of my Lord the King.'" *Skinner.*

37. *Make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.* "He knew that no one having a true father's tenderness could be jealous of his child." *Theodoret.*

38. *The Cherethites and Pelethites.* These were foreign soldiers who formed the nucleus of David's army. (2 Sam. 8. 18.) The former are mentioned in 1 Sam. 30. 14 as living in the Negeb, and it has been thought that the term Pelethites was a corruption of the Hebrew for Philistines.

39. *An horn.* R. V., *the horn. Tabernacle.* R. V., *tent.* Probably the one constructed by David on Mt. Zion for the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6. 17). *God save.* R. V., *Long live.*

40. *The earth rent with the sound of them.* An instance of oriental hyperbole. "It is suspected that there is a slight corruption in the Hebrew text, and that the verb really used meant 'resounded.'"

50. *The horns of the altar.* Wooden projections overlaid with brass at the four corners of the altar. There is an allusion to the altar as a place of refuge for evil doers in Ex. 21. 12–14. Probably it was the altar of Mount Zion.

51. *Caught hold.* R. V., *laid hold. Let king Solomon.* He acknowledges him as his king. *To-day.* R. V., *first.* Before he would dare leave his place of safety. *Slay with the sword.* He knows that his offence is worthy of death.

52. *Solomon said.* He did not swear as Adonijah wished. *There shall not a hair of him fall to the earth.* A proverbial expression for "No harm whatever shall come to him." *If wickedness shall be found.* R. V., *be found.* "If he shall again be caught with any new plots." *Josephus.*

53. *Bowed himself.* R. V., *did obeisance.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

34. *Let the priest and the prophet anoint him their king over Israel.* The essential and decisive feature of the coronation ceremonies was the act of anointing. It consisted in pouring sacred oil on the head of the monarch, and was probably in ordinary cases performed by a priest. The primary meaning in the rite seems to have been to establish a relation between the king and the deity, in virtue of which his person was considered inviolable. (1 Sam. 24. 6; 26. 9.) But with this there was early associated the other idea of the communication of the divine Spirit, to whose indwelling all kingly virtues were ascribed. (1 Sam. 16. 13.) The lack of this indispensable function blighted Adonijah's prospects of the throne. *Professor Skinner.*

35. *He shall be king in my stead.* Soon after the coronation of Solomon the aged king was called away. His life had been an eventful one. Few of his years were without war or turmoil, but through all difficulties he advanced to a position higher than had been held by any man of his race. The best example of a self-made man, is what he has recently been called. That he prepared the way for the more showy reign of Solomon is one of the least of the things he accomplished. He may be said to have created a united Israel. *Henry Preserved Smith, Old Testament History.*

35. *I have appointed him to be prince over Israel and over Judah.* Whether the 72d Psalm be David's composition or that of Solomon, it doubtless ex-

presses the aspiration with which the dying father looked forward to the reign of his son, and as such throws a strangely interesting light on the spiritual life of Israel in those days, in its highest manifestations. Written under the full influence of divine inspiration, it points in its higher application to the glorious reign of the Messiah, in whom the kingdom of God on earth, then represented by Israel, would attain its supreme and unfading glory. But it none the less expresses the ideal of earthly monarchy in the minds of the nobler heroes of the age of David and of his illustrious son; an ideal rare indeed in the conceptions either of subjects or monarch of any age. *Cunningham Geikie, Hours with the Bible.*

38. *The Cherethites and the Pelethites.* The Gibborim (heroes, or *bravi*) were to David what the Praetorian Guard was to the Roman emperors, or the Varangian Guard to the Byzantine emperors, or the Janissaries to the Sultans, or the Swiss Guards to the French kings. They were soldiers by profession, dependent on the king for their pay, and subservient to him with an allegiance which was not without danger to the popular liberty. To belong to this body was itself a distinction, and the records of deeds of prowess achieved by the leading officers were like the chronicles of chivalry, and fired the imagination of younger aspirants for warlike fame. Beside them, or mingled up with them and often under the same command, were the Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites, in all probability a band of foreign mercenaries, who served as a body of lictors to execute the king's commands. *Farrar, Solomon.*

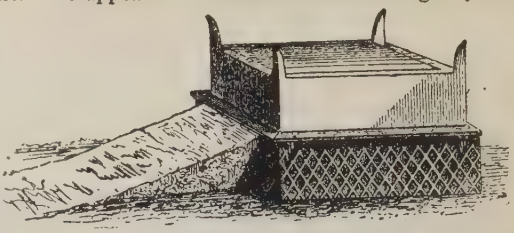
LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

33. *Cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule.* Mules are not heard of in Israelitish history before the time of David, and in David's lifetime the use of mules seems to have been restricted to the royal family or to distinguished persons. (2 Sam. 13. 29; 18. 9.) Common people used asses, and the war-horse was not used before Solomon's time. To ride in the chariot or on the beast which carried the king was a special mark of honor. Pharaoh honored Joseph by causing him to "ride in the second chariot which he had," Gen. 41. 43, but David's object was not so much to honor Solomon as to let the people know by this means that Solomon was to be his successor. The rabbis say that "it was death to ride on the king's mule without his permission." Herodotus tells us that in Persia one who sat even by accident in the king's seat was immediately put to death.

40. *The people piped with pipes.* The pipe was one of the most ancient, as it was one of the simplest, of instruments. It was originally merely a reed with holes perforated at certain distances, whence it derived its Hebrew name, *chalil, bored through.* As its use became more general it was made with greater care, and sometimes of other materials, such as brass, box-wood, horn, bone, or ivory. *Freeman.*

50. *He caught hold on the horns of the altar.* The right of asylum in sacred places was common among all ancient peoples. On the horns of the altar the atoning blood was sprinkled, hence they became "symbols of blessing and salvation, and by grasping them the offender put himself under God's protection." This is nowhere stated in the Bible, but it is implied in Ex. 21. 13, 14, where it says if a man kill another, he shall be put to death, "but if God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint a place whither he shall flee. And if a man come

presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die." It appears that unless a man was guilty of a heinous offense, he was safe from punishment when he grasped the horns of the altar. Compare the purpose of the cities of refuge, Joshua 20.



The Horns of the Altar

52. *If he shall show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth.* Solomon's magnanimity in pardoning Adonijah is contrary to oriental custom. "It has often been the custom for each king on his accession to put to death all his brothers as mere possible pretenders. In Turkey this custom continued into the present century."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From the royal palace the procession went to Gihon, where Solomon was anointed, and then returned. There are various theories as to the location of Gihon. Many modern scholars believe that it was the Virgin's Spring in the Kidron Valley, at the base of the hill on which David's citadel stood.

En-rogel, where Adonijah held his sacrificial feast, is thought to have been the so-called Well of Job, where the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys unite. Gihon, then, was nearer the palace than was En-rogel.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After the end of Absalom's rebellion, David returned to Jerusalem. On his homeward march, Shimei, who had cursed the king as he fled from Jerusalem, came to David and received pardon, and Mephibosheth came to explain that he had been loyal to his king, but his servant had deceived him. Barzillai, who had provided for David and his retinue at Mahanaim, went with him on his way as far as the Jordan, and when David besought him to come with him to Jerusalem he pleaded his age and begged that Chimham might have the honor in his stead. "All the people of Judah and half the people of Israel" met their king and escorted him over the Jordan. A strife arose between Judah and Israel, which ended in the revolt of the men of Israel under Sheba. On reaching Jerusalem David ordered Amasa to pursue Sheba. Joab treacherously murdered Amasa, led the troops against Sheba, and besieged the town of Abel. He agreed to leave the city if given the head of Sheba, and this condition was fulfilled.

David had now become old and feeble, and Adonijah, his oldest son, attempted to seize the kingdom. Like Absalom, he assumed the royal state, with his horses and chariots, and like him, too, he was goodly to look upon. Joab, the General, and Abiathar, the Priest, espoused his cause. Adonijah gave a great feast at En-rogel, at which he was hailed king. Nathan informed Bathsheba of Adonijah's plans, and Bathsheba reported them to David, reminding him that he had promised that Solomon, her son, should be his successor. Nathan followed and confirmed her account. Then David solemnly

swore to Bathsheba that Solomon should succeed him. The date of Solomon's accession may have been 970 B. C. He reigned 40 years.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Why are the names Charles or Frank or Helen or Margaret, or whatever the name may be, given to boys and girls these days; is it because of what the names mean, or because the parents like them, or they have belonged to others for whom the parents wish to have their children called? In Bible times names seem to have been given for their meaning. Do you know what the name *Frederick* means? It means "Peaceful." Frederick in German is "Friedrich," and if you knew German you would see that the first part of the word means *peace,* and the second is a changed form of the word *reich, rich;* rich in peace, then, the name means. There is a Hebrew name, *Shelômôh,* which we call Solomon, that means the same thing as the name Frederick. David gave this name Solomon, The Peaceful, to one of his sons. What was the name of an older son who went to battle in the hope of gaining his father's throne? Absalom means "Father of Peace." These names, Absalom and Solomon, indicate that David longed for peace, he had had enough of war. What was one reason given why he himself should not build the temple? David's enemies called him "a man of blood." Our lesson to-day shows him to us in his old age, when his days of war and of peace alike are about over, and the time has come when the one who is to be king after him must be appointed.

For Older Pupils. David is now seventy years old and physically feeble. Who should be his successor? In order to understand the situation we must remember that neither precedent nor law was firmly established so as to regulate the matter. Saul and David themselves had been elected by the people. The law of primogeniture would give the throne to Adonijah, and it seems from Adonijah's words in 1 Kings 2. 15 that the people had looked upon him as the rightful heir. "Thou knowest," he said, "that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's; for it was his from Jehovah." David, on the other hand, claimed the right to nominate his successor. "And thou, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him," said Bathsheba to David. Nathan said to him, "My lord, the king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne"?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I King Solomon

His Glory. "Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these," said Jesus as he pointed to the lilies of the field. Perhaps it is this remark of Jesus that leads us to think more often of Solomon's glory than of anything else connected with Solomon, more even than of his far-famed wisdom. The contrast between the life of King Saul and King Solomon is startling. Saul was king of a nation of peasants; Gibeah, his capital, seems to have been but an ordinary village; in his dwelling-house he lived very

simply. Solomon was king of a nation having in all respects wider prospects and a changed mode of life; Jerusalem, his capital, was a walled citadel, and in his magnificent palace he lived sumptuously. Only fifty years after Saul's death, Solomon's glory was the wonder of other eastern nations. Jesse sent David to King Saul with a gift of loaves of bread, bottles of wine, and a kid. The Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon and brought gifts of gold, spices, and precious stones as a fitting tribute. What would Saul, fresh from his father's farm, have thought of Solomon's magnificent royal state? His throne was made of ivory, overlaid with plates of pure gold, and lions on either side of the six steps led up to his throne. "There was not the like made in any kingdom." All the royal drinking vessels were of pure gold. "None was of silver," the record says, "for silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon," for "the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones." The stately guard that lined the way when Solomon left the palace were all armed with shields of gold, and Josephus adds that the drivers of Solomon's swift horses had gold dust sprinkled in their hair every day, "so that their heads sparkled with the reflection of the sun-beams from the gold."

His Prosperous Reign. While we know more about Solomon's court and about his public enterprises, than we do about any other king of Israel, we know very little about Solomon himself, for few are the personal incidents related. How vividly David stands out before us as a real, mighty man of valor, while Solomon in all his glory is but a dim shadow of a man. We see Solomon in his official capacity, on the judgment seat, dedicating the temple; we do not see him braving the lion and the bear to defend his flock, winning the heart of a Jonathan at court, attracting to himself when in exile the brave men of the kingdom, admitting to a prophet that he had sinned, weeping over a rebellious son.

Solomon's rule had a faithful beginning. He seems to have been equally famed for his wisdom and his justice, his commerce and his buildings, his gold and his treasures. As Augustus Cæsar is said to have found Rome brick and left it marble, so it may be said of Solomon that he found Jerusalem a fortress and left it a city, he found the sanctuary a tent and left it a temple of stone. The walls and defences of Jerusalem he extended and strengthened. For himself he built a palace that required thirteen years to complete, although he had an army of workmen. The House of the Forest of Lebanon, the Porch of Pillars, the Porch of the Throne, and the House of Pharaoh's Daughter (one of his wives), embellished the city and satisfied his personal ambition and desire for splendor.

In alliance with the king of Tyre, the capital of Phenicia, he built a fleet of ships at Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea, where the Israelites in their wanderings after the exodus encamped. This fleet came back richly freighted from southern Arabia, which then possessed a highly civilized and prosperous people, and brought back ivory, apes, and peacocks from Ophir, which is thought to have been at the mouth of the Indus in India. Another fleet in the Mediterranean brought back the riches of Spain. He collected toll from the caravan routes between Asia and Egypt, and became himself a trader, deriving a large profit from the horses and chariots with which he provided the Hittite and Aramæan kings. But his commercial enterprises could not pay for his expenditures; he paid Hiram of Tyre in the annual revenue of grain and oil, and later ceded to him twenty towns on the Phenician frontier. When he

increased the taxes, and excepted those of his own tribe of Judah, he sowed the seeds of jealousy and discontent among the Northern Tribes which bore fruit on his death in the disruption of the kingdom.

His Downfall. In Deuteronomy 17. 16, 17, concerning the kings to be over Israel it states that "he shall not multiply horses to himself, neither shall he multiply wives to himself, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold." All these commands Solomon disobeyed. In 1 Kings 3. 3, we read that "Solomon loved Jehovah, walking in the statutes of David, his father"; but in 1 Kings 11. 4, the report is that "It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods." "Solomon's fatal weakness was for wives," says Dr. van Dyke in *Sermons to Young Men*. "One of his chief objects was to increase his political influence by contracting alliances with the princesses of surrounding nations. He went on adding to his burdens and entanglements, every month bringing a new princess into the royal household, and every princess bringing a new god, until at length he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Hated by his people for the heavy burdens of taxation which he was forced to lay upon them for the support of his costly household, turned hither and thither by wives who neither understood his wisdom nor cared for his greatness, but only for his gold, worshipping at the shrines of a hundred gods, in none of which he believed — what an old age is this! It is the very mockery of greatness, the supreme irony of fate, that the hoary head of the wisest of monarchs should be crowned by his own hands with the cap of a fool. And all this because he did not understand that to guide one's own life is a harder and more perilous task than to rule a kingdom."

II Serve Him with a Willing Mind

Solomon's Service of God. "Know thou the god of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind," are David's words in an address given in 1 Chronicles 28. David himself had reserved his God with a loyal faithfulness, to do God's will had been the ruling principle of his life. "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart," he says in the fortieth Psalm.

Will Solomon obey his counsel, and serve God with an equally perfect heart and willing mind? We see him to-day as he ascends the throne with the most brilliant prospects before him; two weeks later we see him dedicating the temple which he built with so much zeal, and in all these scenes he seems to be following this counsel of his father David. But we pass on to the close of his reign, and we find him not only not serving his father's God, but even serving false gods.

When Serving God is Easy. The scientists tell us that the atmosphere presses upon us with a weight of some fifteen pounds to the square inch, so that a grown man carries a burden of about fifteen tons. How is it that the weight does not crush us? The fact is that the gases and fluids inside our body press outward and balance the external pressure, so that we are unconscious of it. So far from feeling the air to be lead, we speak of the lightest things as being light as air. It is much like this with the law of God. The internal force in all Christ's true disciples has become equal to the exterior demand. Our conscience, heart, and will are filled with heavenly, profound,

irresistible strength, and the weight of the law is the weight of a rose leaf. When we are born of God, know His love, and realize His grace, we are able to say with our Maker, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." *W. L. Watkinson, The Blind Spot.*

When Serving God is a Delight. Two things are connected with the pleasure which lawyers have in their calling. There are two terms which are constantly used. I ask what a young man is doing, and I am told that he is *studying* law. I ask the same question a few years later, and I am told he is *practising* law. These two things belong in the delight of the man of the law and are essential to its permanence. It is not enough that one should have a collection of law-books, should occasionally read in them, should admire very many things which they contain; but he must make a patient study of the law, and faithfully apply its principles to the interests of men. Grant me these two things, and I will promise a true delight in the law of the Lord.

We find the love of the law by taking it from Christ. It is expressed in His life, it is spoken by His lips. Hear Christ teach the law. Mark the tone of His voice, the accent, the emphasis. See the radiance of His face. Mark the grace and truth which are upon Him, and the love of the law will spring readily in your heart. You will see its beauty, feel its attraction, and will be ready to say with the old singer, "O how love I Thy law!" *Alexander McKenzie.*

III Know Thou the God of Thy Father

Adonijah. One of the explanations given (I Kings 1.6) of Adonijah's pretension to the throne is the foolish indulgence of his father: "His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" It would seem as though David, looking back on the hardships of his own youth and early manhood, determined, as so many fathers do in these days, that his sons should not have to pass through such trying experiences. He gave them a very different life indeed, accustomed them to the luxuries of royalty from the beginning, and Absalom and Adonijah proved by their lives that it would have been far better had he "displeased them," instead of humoring them in all their wishes, and had he questioned them about their actions, instead of paying no heed to what they did. The fate of Amnon and of Absalom had no warning for Adonijah; like them, "he exalted himself, saying, I will be king." He imitated Absalom in preparing a great feast at which he permitted his followers to shout, "God save King Adonijah!" When his followers deserted him on hearing of the anointing of Solomon, Adonijah, fearing for his life, fled to the sanctuary and caught hold of the horns of the altar. In time of danger he sought the sanctuary of Jehovah, but his life shows that in prosperity he knew not the God of his father. David had named him Adonijah, which means "Jehovah is my Lord," but he had paid little heed to the meaning of his name.

The Need of God in Times of Prosperity. A Scotsman of long ago is said to have offered this prayer: "O Lord, hae a care o' Rob, for he is on the great deep, an' Thou holdest it in the hollow of Thy hand. And hae a care o' Jamie, for he has gone to fight the enemies o' his country, an' the outcome o' the battle is wi' Thee. But ye need na fash yersel' wi' Willy, for I hae him here, an' I'm cawpable o' lookin' after him mysel'." Too many of us are like that Scotsman in thinking that we are capable of looking after ourselves, and only when trouble comes do we seek guidance and help from God. The pro-

verbial sailor, who thinks of God only when in danger of shipwreck, has his counterpart on land.

Bishop Phillips Brooks beautifully expresses in these words the thought of our need of God in prosperity as well as in adversity: "God is not a crutch coming to help your lameness, unnecessary to you if you have all your strength; the stronger you are, the more thoroughly you are yourself, the more your need of it and the more your need of Him."

A Man who knew God. One night in our Prayer Service we had the subject, "What in my life has helped me most toward Jesus Christ?" And one after another told his experience. At last rose a man for whom I have always had a most profound respect, a man of no great education, but a godly man. He had never spoken of himself before, and didn't wish to exalt himself in the least. He said: "The one thing which has helped me most in my Christian experience is this: for many years I have been in the habit of getting up half an hour earlier than necessary in order that I might spend that half hour in prayer, and in reading God's Word, and in meditation." That man is a car conductor and is obliged to rise every morning at three o'clock, and in order to spend a little time with God he gets up at half past two. *James H. Hoadley,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The noblest characters can emerge from the worst surroundings, and moral failures come out of the best. *M. D. Babcock.*

I count life just a stuff to try the soul's strength on. *Browning.*

Man can not escape responsibility of choice; it faces him at every moment of his life, most of all in those beautiful and strenuous days when the bases of his manhood are being laid; then it is that he ought to seek the kingdom of God that he may win the noblest manhood. *A. M. Fairbairn.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Jehovah magnified Solomon exceedingly, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel. 1 Chron. 29. 25.

And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed; for Jehovah God, even my God, is with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until all the work for the service of the house of Jehovah be finished. 1 Chron. 28. 20.

To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. Luke 12. 48.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

The character of Solomon is one of the loftiest and also one of the lowest in the Scriptures. What is its lesson for me? His fall was not a sudden one There is an Arabian fable that there was a worm in the staff on which he leaned which secretly gnawed it asunder; the worm, the tendency to do that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, was there in his youth, and gradually it led to his demoralization and fall. Let us beware of the beginnings of evil.

Solomon tried to serve God and also the idols of his heathen princesses. No man can serve two masters. The question always is, whom shall he serve.

The anointing oil of the Lord is upon me as it was upon Solomon. I have taken the name of Christian; what have I done to-day that I would not have done were I not a Christian?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

David realized that prompt measures must be taken to assure the throne to Solomon, and he gave explicit directions for Solomon's immediate installation. He sent for Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the commander of the household troops, and bade them mount Solomon on the king's mule, accompanying him and the body-guard to Gihon, anoint him there, and proclaim him king. Benaiah answered for all, saying, "As Jehovah hath been with my lord the king, even so be He with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David."

David's orders were carried out; the trumpet blast pealed forth the proclamation to the assembled troops, who shouted back, "Long live King Solomon!" and all the people came back to the palace rejoicing. Adonijah and his guests heard the trumpet blasts and the uproar in the city, and their feasting quickly ended. The son of Abiathar brought them word of what had taken place. The guests all fled, and Adonijah took refuge in the sanctuary and caught hold of the horns of the altar. To Solomon who had been borne in triumph to the palace and seated on the royal throne, Adonijah's resolve was brought, that he would not leave his position till Solomon swore to spare him. Had Adonijah been successful in his plans, no doubt he would have put Solomon and Bathsheba both to death, but Solomon magnanimously gave his word that as long as Adonijah behaved worthily, he should not perish. Adonijah came and bowed himself humbly before his younger brother, hailing him as king, and Solomon dismissed him to his home.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The mistaken statecraft of the ruler whose motto might well have been: The State — I am the State. *H. P. Smith.*

2. David as shepherd, soldier, statesman, poet, king, friend, and father.

3. A comparison of the religious spirit of Saul, David, and Solomon. "Saul was self-willed, David was self-subdued, Solomon was self-contained. The religion of Saul was associational, the religion of David was personal, the religion of Solomon was official."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Give Isaiah's denunciation of intemperance in our last temperance lesson. 2. Read in Isaiah 8. 5–8 Isaiah's description of the Assyrian invasion as a destructive flood. 3. What was the crown of pride of Ephraim? 4. Describe the situation of Samaria. 5. What did the law prohibit to priests in Lev. 10. 9? (See also Ezek. 44. 21). 6. Compare the charge made against the prophets in Micah 5. 5–7. 7. With verse 10 compare a parallel passage in Heb. 5. 12–14. 8. With Isaiah's words to the people who paid no heed to his repeated warnings, compare Christ's parable in Matt. 21. 33–44. 9. Read the remainder of the chapter. 10. What is the meaning of the parable?

LESSON IX — NOVEMBER 29

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY

Isaiah 28. 1–13. Commit verse 11.

Golden Text

I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. I Cor. 9. 27.

LESSON TEXT Isaiah 28. 1–13

1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, *which* as a tempest of hail *and* a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which *is* on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, *and* as the hasty fruit before the summer; which *when* he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment.

8 For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness, *so that there is* no place *clean.*

9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are* weaned from the milk *and* drawn from the breasts.

10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

12 To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

13 But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go and fall backward and be broken and snared and taken.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Woe to the crown of pride.* The reference is to Samaria, the boast of the Ephraimites. The prophet here pictures the city as a drunken reveler whose head is encircled with a floral wreath, in which the flowers are fading. *To the drunkards.* R. V., *of the drunkards. Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower.* R. V., *and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty.* The flower which has been the glory of Ephraim is destined to fade. *Which are on the head of the fat valleys.* R. V., *which is on the head of the fat valley. Of them that are overcome with wine.* R. V., margin, *of them that are smitten down with wine.*

2. *A mighty and strong one.* Assyria. "Ho Assyria, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is my indignation! I will send him against a profane nation." (Isa. 10. 5, 6.) *Which as.* R. V., *as. A tempest.* R. V., *a flood. Shall cast down.* R. V., *will he cast down. With the hand.* R. V., margin, *with violence.* Compare Isa. 8. 5–8.

3. *Under feet.* R. V., *under foot.*

4. R. V., *And the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the first ripe fig before the summer. The fat valley.* The valley in which Samaria was located was fertile.

5. *Shall the Lord of hosts be.* R. V., *Will Jehovah of hosts become. For a diadem.* R. V., *a diadem.* Samaria's fortress — the crown of pride — is cast down to the earth, but there is comfort for the people who remain, for Jehovah Himself will be to them a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty.

6. *And for a.* R. V., *and a. To him that sitteth in judgment.* Isa. 32. 1. *Turn the battle to the gate.* R. V., *turn back the battle at the gate.* The enemy shall enter the city, but the inhabitants, strengthened by Jehovah, shall drive them back out of the city gates.

7. R. V., *And even these reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they stagger with strong drink. Even these.* The priest and the prophet of Judah are like the drunkards of Ephraim, verse 1. *They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.* The lower order of prophets are intoxicated even in their prophetic visions, and the priests even in their judicial functions.

8. *All tables.* "The tables are those of sacrificial feasts. The excesses that took place, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingatherings, when the vintage was ended, was no uncommon feature (1 Sam. 1. 13; Amos 2. 8) and awakened Isaiah's wrath (22. 13)." *New Century Bible.*

9–13. Isaiah has evidently surprised the drunken revellers at their feast, and these verses are a dialogue between him and them. 9. They insolently mock Isaiah. Are they little children to whom he must bring knowledge? *Shall.* R. V., *will. Doctrine.* R. V., *the message.* The message *Isaiah as prophet has* received from the Lord.

10. *Precept must be upon precept.* R. V., *it is precept upon precept.* Compare Heb. 5. 12–14.

11. R. V., *Nay, but by men of strange lips and with another tongue.* "Isaiah makes use of their own sarcasm. He tells them that the Lord will speak to them by a foreign and hostile people (the Assyrians), whose utterance will be to them as stammering, strange jargon." *Lange.*

12. *Wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest.* R. V., *give ye rest to him that is weary.* See Isa. 30. 15; Jer. 6. 16.

13. *But the word was.* R. V., *Therefore shall the word be. Might go.* R. V., *may go.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

5. *In that day will Jehovah of hosts become a crown of glory.* The crown of Ephraim was become as a fading flower: then is all over in human history? When man fails, God seems to expand upon the vision of the universe with a new amplitude, and to glow with a new and unimagined splendor. "In that day will Jehovah of hosts become a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty

unto the residue of His people." The Lord will not leave the universe in the hands of drunken princes. The great purpose of the divine creation shall roll on to inevitable fruition and glory, though Ephraim turn aside, and Jerusalem herself — city of peace, city of beauty — be numbered amongst the cities of confusion. Our trust is in the living God. Princes disappoint us; prophets, preachers, teachers, go astray; the brightest minds suffer at least momentary eclipse; but God reigns, and that which is crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be made plain. *Joseph Parker,* in *The People's Bible.*

5. *A diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people.* The lesson of Tennyson's *Vision of Sin* and of Arnold's *New Sirens,* that night and frost, decay and death, come down at last on pampered sense, is necessary, but not enough. Who stops there remains a defective and morbid moralist. When you have made the sensual shiver before the disease that inevitably awaits them, you must go on to show that there are men who have the secret of surviving the most terrible judgments of God, and lift their figures calm and victorious against the storm-washed sky. Preach the depravity of men, but never apart from the possibilities that remain in them. It is Isaiah's health as a moralist that he combines the two. No prophet ever threatened judgment more inexorable and complete than he. Yet he never failed to tell the sinner, how possible it was for him to be different. If it were necessary to crush men in the mud, Isaiah would not leave them there with the hearts of swine. But he put conscience in them, and the envy of what was pure, and the admiration of what was victorious. Even as they wallowed, he pointed them to the figures of men like themselves, who had survived and overcome by the Spirit of God. *George Adam Smith,* in *The Expositor's Bible.*

10. The original *tzaw latzaw tzaw latzaw, kaw lakaw kaw lakaw* is a mocking conformation of Isaiah's message to a nurse's child-prattle. We might attempt to reproduce it by "Law on law, law on law; saw on saw, saw on saw; (*saw* instead of *saying* for the sake of rhyme) a bittie here and a bittie there." We see no mimicry of a drunkard's stammering here. The words are purposely abbreviated and reduced to rhyme in the Hebrew. The priests attempt to convey the impression of stale and wearisome iteration in the prophet's message. *New Century Bible.*

11. *By men of strange lips.* The Assyrian language, although closely allied to Hebrew, was sufficiently different from it both in grammar and in vocabulary to seem a "stammering" or "barbarous" tongue to Isaiah's contemporaries. The common diplomatic and commercial language of Syria and Assyria was Aramaic. *Cheyne.*

12. *This is the rest.* Isaiah practically grants the monotony, or rather the uniformity, of his preaching. But there was but one remedy for the evils of the time. "Through returning and rest shall ye be saved," 30. 15. It was the "rest," not of passive obedience to Assyria, but of hearty faith in Jehovah, which is recommended. Compare Micah 2. 10; Jer. 6. 16. *Cheyne.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *As the first ripe fig.* This was esteemed a great delicacy, as it ripens in June, whereas the rest come to maturity in August. (Hos. 9. 10; Micha. 7. 1.) It is so much sought after that no sooner is it seen than it is greedily devoured. The fate of Samaria is to be quickly consummated. As a matter of history, we

know that Assyria did not succeed in devouring Samaria in quite so summary a fashion. Its siege lasted two years. (2 Kings 18. 10.) *New Century Bible.*

10. *Precept upon precept, line upon line.* The Hebrew word translated *precept* signifies a *little precept,* such as is suited to the capacity of a little child. The *line* is the line which a mason stretches out to build a layer of stones by. (Compare 2 Kings 21. 13.) After one layer or course is placed, he raises the line and builds another; thus the building is by degrees regularly completed. This is the method of teaching children, giving them such information as their narrow capacities can receive; and thus the prophet dealt with the Israelites. *Adam Clarke.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The prophet Isaiah is speaking to the drunken leaders of Judah in their capital city of Jerusalem. In the first few verses he describes the drunkards of Ephraim, the leading tribe in the Northern Kingdom whose name sometimes

Assyrian Drinking Scene

stands for the whole kingdom. Their capital city was Samaria, located in a fruitful valley midway between the Jordan and the Sea. Its beautiful situation on the brow of an isolated hill, itself crowned by numerous towers, naturally suggested Isaiah's figure of a wreath of flowers.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The prophet Isaiah directs the drunken leaders of Jerusalem to turn their thoughts to the north, and see the impending doom of Samaria. The destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians under Sargon and the leading of the people into captivity occurred in 722 B. C. At the time of Isaiah's prophecy the city was still standing. He warns the people of Judah that a like fate will befall them. Their policy was to form an alliance with Egypt and a treaty with Assyria herself. But these things would not avail to save them. Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B. C., after a siege lasting three years.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Twice a day the boatmen on the river Trent, in England, send up the thirty miles of river a cry of warning that the great tidal wave, or bore, is coming. The incoming tide from the ocean enters the Humber River, and when it meets the narrower Trent it can no longer spread out as it has been doing, and so it rises on top of the stream which is flowing in the other direction into the Humber. As it advances with a terrible roar up stream, it rises higher and higher, a wall of seemingly angry water with foaming crest, five or six feet high at Gainsborough. It comes so swiftly and with such force that any boats left unanchored are wrecked. The words of warning which the boatmen shout from one to another have a strange sound to us. They are "'Ware Ægir!" Beware the Ægir! It is a cry that comes down from the times when the pagan Danes invaded England. They could not understand this fierce tidal wave; they thought it must be a god, and they named it Ægir. Three months ago we studied a warning cry of the prophet Isaiah against an evil which was to the people of that day a god far more terrible and dangerous than the Ægir of the Danes. What was it? Again and again Isaiah uttered his warning cry, and in our lesson to-day we study other words of his against this same enemy.

For Older Pupils. Coleridge once said that if he were a clergyman in Cornwall, he should preach fifty-two sermons a year against wreckers. As long as intemperance remains so great an evil in our country, four lessons a year against other wreckers are perhaps none too many.

Dr. George Adam Smith says that the 28th chapter of the Book of Isaiah, from which our lesson is taken, that it is one of the greatest of Isaiah's prophecies. "It is distinguished by that regal versatility of style which placed its author at the head of Hebrew writers. The style mirrors life about ourselves. The truths are relevant to every day in which luxury and intemperance abound, in which there are eyes too fevered by sin to see beauty in simple purity, and minds so surfeited with knowledge or intoxicated with their own cleverness, that they call the maxims of moral reason commonplace and scorn religious instruction as food for babies."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I Keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection

The Wonderful Human Body. God made the human body, and it is by far the most exquisite and wonderful organization which has come to us from the divine hand. It is a study for one's whole life. If an undevout astronomer is mad, an undevout physiologist is yet madder. The stomach, that prepares the body's support; the vessels, that distribute the supply; the arteries, that take up the food, and send it around; the lungs that ærate the all-nourishing blood; that muscle-engine which, without fireman or engineer, stands day and night pumping and driving a wholesome stream with vital irrigation through all the system; the nervous system, that unites and harmonizes the whole band of organs; the brain, that dwells in the dome high above all, like a true royalty — these, with their various and wonderful functions, are not to be lightly spoken of, or irreverently held. *Henry Ward Beecher, Sermons.*

The Body seeks Dominion. The Bible divides the human constitution into three — spirit, soul, and body, and these it arranges in this order; the spirit is uppermost, the soul is in the middle, and the body is undermost. But the body is always trying to slip this domination of the powers that are above it, and become uppermost, and if this is allowed to take place the whole life is turned upside down, and man is degraded. And yet there are many tendencies of the time in this direction. For instance, I am told that in our great public schools, which one would suppose would be the very place in all the country where honor would be done to the intellect and its products, athletics are being put before study.

The body has a great many native propensities. For instance, sleep is one of them, and that is a kindly thing, beloved from pole to pole. And yet sleep always tends to encroach upon the hours which do not belong to it, and many a man is a failure because he sleeps too much. Another propensity of the body is eating. We can not live without eating, much less can we work, and there is no reason why we should not enjoy our food, and yet this propensity tends to be a snare and a temptation. Gluttony has in many ages been one of the vices of mankind, sometimes exhibiting itself in very hideous forms. Though yielding too much to the propensity of eating is not characteristic of our day, the same can not be said about drinking. This is a propensity, undue indulgence of which makes a black mark on our age. St. Paul says, "I hold my body under," and every man must do that who isn't going to resign himself to slavery. *James Stalker.*

The Degradation of Drink. Our bodies were created to be temples of the Holy Spirit, and never to be degraded. What are the laws which God has written on the human frame in regard to alcoholic stimulants? Let us notice some of these and their sufficient reasons why every young person should rigidly resolve never to touch any intoxicating drinks except on rare occasions when a wise physician may prescribe them as medicine.

1. The first reason is that no healthy human body requires alcohol, and the best work of the brain and the limb is done without it. Alcohol neither feeds nor strengthens. It absolutely lessens the muscular power. The young athletes in collegiate boat-races, when under training for regatta races, are not allowed to use alcoholics.

2. Every glass of wine that contains a considerable amount of alcohol, and every glass of brandy, is an irritant.

3. Intoxicants have a most dangerous affinity for the brain. A glass of strong wine or brandy makes for the brain as a hound makes for a deer in the forest. When the alcohol reaches the brain it overturns the throne of reason, and transforms the man into the fool or the maniac.

4. No one is absolutely safe who tampers with an intoxicant. You may say, "Every man who drinks liquors does not become a sot." Very true, but every sot drinks liquors; and not one in a million ever expected to become a sot when he began with his champagne or his sherry. Will you run the risk? I would not. The two reasons why I am a teetotaler are that I dare not trust myself, and I dare not tempt others by my example. *Theodore L. Cuyler.*

The Soul on Top. The incident is often repeated of the little girl who listened to a sermon on the subject of our Golden Text, and when asked on her return home what the text had been replied promptly, "I keep my soul on top." This is the true lesson; if the soul is kept on top there will be no question

about the subjection of the body. Says Dr. Henry Churchill King: "Any man who means to be the man he can be in character, must say, 'I am going to get positive help out of this body of mine,' and if that is to be true, he must make his body the best instrument he can make it for the spirit, the very best medium for the spirit to work out through. I suppose that it ought to be true that a series of photographs of a man taken from year to year through his life ought to show that the spirit is increasingly dominating the body, and that the light of the spirit, yea, of the Spirit of God, is increasingly shining out through the face, the bearing, and mien."

II Sinning against Warning

They would not hear. "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink! Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim! Attend unto me. Hearken unto me. Thus saith Jehovah. Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind. Who is there among you that will give ear to this? That will hearken and hear for the time to come?" Thus Isaiah warned and threatened the people, foretold the destruction that would inevitably befall them, but they would not heed, they scoffed at his words, and their doom followed.

You have read, of course, about men who have escaped from a sinking ship in a small boat or on a raft, and have drifted helplessly about without food or drink for several days before being picked up by a passing steamer. In that boat there has usually been some one who suffered so from thirst that, despite all warnings of the terrible consequences, he has tried to quench it by drinking the sea water, and then, becoming frenzied, and insane, he has leaped overboard and been drowned. Like such a man is the one who indulges too often in strong drink, which as surely as the sea water, though not always as speedily, makes him frenzied, then drives him on, not only to his own destruction, but often to that of several others also. Like him, too, he knows what stuff he is drinking, he has been warned again and again of the evil consequences that will follow, but he will not heed the warning.

They were repeatedly warned. In the Johnstown flood six thousand lives were lost. The flood was caused by the bursting of a dam at the head of the valley. For more than a year it was known that the dam was unsafe, that it could not stand the pressure of heavy rains. The rains came, the dam gave way, and the flood followed.

The landslide which occurred in the village of Haverstraw on the Hudson hurled many houses into a clay pit, and many lives were lost. The pit had been dug by brickmakers, and it was seen that the houses on the bluff above were being undermined. Several times the owners were warned that they must move. On the day the catastrophe occurred, the chief of police noticed a wide crack in the street, and he went to each house and warned the inmates to leave at once. "Oh, I guess the bank will hold a little longer," they told him; they had become accustomed to the threatened danger, and they did not leave. Even after some houses had collapsed, people rushed into houses already tottering on their foundations to save some of their property, and perished miserably.

Judas did not rush blindly to his fate. For two years, at least, he lived with Jesus, and Jesus, seeing his peril, sounded again and again a warning note.

Yet Judas failed to heed the repeated warnings, and harbored his thoughts till they led him on to his dastardly deed. It is not for lack of warning, precept upon precept, that evil deeds are committed now. Seldom is a sinner ignorant of the results of sin; he sins against repeated warnings.

Too Late. A sailor reported to his captain that the water was gaining upon the vessel. The captain drove him away with scoffs. Twice, thrice the warning was repeated. Each time the warning was unheeded. At last the barge began to give evidences of sinking. The captain ordered the men to the boats. They took their places. He then said, "I told you there was plenty of time." Then he took out his knife to cut the cable which bound the boat to the barge. He fell back with a cry of horror: the cable was an iron chain! *Henry Drummond.*

III Precept upon Precept

The Need of Repetitions. In planting corn, the proverb is, one grain for the crow, one grain for the worm, and one grain for the stalk. And in teaching a child the principle is drilled into memory once to be forgotten, a second time, to be neglected; a third time to be obeyed and transmitted into conduct and character. *Newell Dwight Hillis.*

With Another Tongue will he speak. We gather from Isaiah that God speaks twice to men, first in words and then by deeds, but both times very simply and plainly. And if men deride and abuse the simplicity of the former, if they ignore moral and religious truths because they are elementary, and rebel against the quiet reiteration of simple voices, with which God sees it most healthy to conduct their education, then they shall be stunned by the commonplace pertinacity, with which the effects of their insolence work themselves out in life. God's ways with men are mostly commonplace; that is the hardest lesson we have to learn. The tongue of conscience speaks like the tongue of time, prevailing by ticks and moments; not in undue excitement of soul and body, not in the stirring up of our passions nor by enlisting our ambitions, not in thunder nor in startling visions, but by every-day precepts of faithfulness, honor, and purity, to which conscience has to rise unwinged by fancy or ambition, and dreadfully weighted with the dreariness of life. If we, carried away upon the rushing interests of the world, and with our appetite spoiled by the wealth and piquancy of intellectual knowledge, despise the simple monitions of conscience and Scripture, as uninteresting and childish, this is the risk we run,—that God will speak to us in another, and this time unshirkable, kind of commonplace. What that is we shall understand, when a career of dissipation or unscrupulous ambition has bereft life of all interest and joy, when one enthusiasm after another grows dull, and one pleasure after another tasteless, when all the little things of life preach to us of judgment, and the grasshopper becometh a burden, and we, slowly descending through the drab and monotony of decay, suffer the last great commonplace, death. *George Adam Smith, The Expositor's Bible.*

The Mills of God grind slowly. Bit by bit, with gradual steps, with dismal persistence, like the slow drops on the rock, the judgments of God trickle out on the mocking heart. It takes a long time for the child to learn a pageful, when he gets his lesson a sentence at a time. So slowly do His chastisements fall on men who have despised His continuous messages. *Maclaren.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Nothing is conquered until self is overcome. *Chinese Proverb.*

In the temperance revolution we shall find a stronger bondage (than slavery) broken, a viler slavery manumitted, a greater tyrant deposed. *Lincoln.*

Even after a shipwreck there are hosts who will seek the sea. *Seneca.*

To man, propose this test:
Thy body at its best,
How far can it project thy soul on its lone way? *Browning.*

The problem of life is the right adjustment of spirit and body, so that the former shall never be servant, but always master, of the latter. *Bradford.*

Some folks smile at the folly of youth in dragging a sled uphill for the fleeting pleasure of riding down on it; but that youth is a sage compared with the man who works hard all the week and then drinks up his wages on Saturday night. *Josh Billings.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? And ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.

If, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning, if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. Ezek. 33. 3, 4.

The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Matt. 21. 43.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Charles Dana Boardman suggests that "when we come to receive our final awards, the Judge will ask: 'What did you do with your body? What use did you make of your eyes, your hands, your feet? Did you use them for My service and man's, or for your own?'" What answer could I make to these questions?

Have I learned all that there is to be learned from any part of God's word? Do I ever feel that any Sunday-school lesson is very familiar, I have known it since I was in the primary class, I do not need to be taught that lesson over again? Then I am as blind to the truths I need to learn as were those Ephraimites of old.

We would strive for the mastery, we would be temperate in all things. With God's help we will take heed to our ways now in our youth, and we will walk in the paths of prudence all our days.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim! exclaims the prophet Isaiah. The image which he first throws on the screen is that of a drunken reveler whose wreath of flowers is fading; it represents the city of Samaria, "the crown of pride," picturesquely situated on its low hill in the

midst of a fertile valley, and surrounded by a crown of towers. The wreath is already fading, and soon will be trodden under foot. The Lord has a mighty agent, Assyria, which, like a tempest of hail, a destructive storm, a flood of mighty waters, shall violently smite and overthrow the city. Like the first ripe fig of the summer, which is no sooner seen than it is seized and eaten, shall the city be taken and destroyed. But Isaiah has a word of comfort for those who survive that storm, Jehovah shall be to them a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty, giving the spirit of justice to him that sits in judgment, and the promise of strength to those that drive the enemy from their gates.

Next Isaiah turns his attention to the priests and prophets of Judah. Even they are reeling and staggering with strong drink, the prophets are unable to discern the meaning of visions, the priests are unable to give just judgments. Isaiah has surprised them at a sacrificial feast, where there is no place clean because of their drunken revelry, and they turn upon him insolently, and with mocking words they tell him they are not children needing to be taught, they are of age, and they are weary of the endless monotony, the stammering jargon, the platitudes and repetitions of his warnings. "Yes," returns Isaiah, making use of their own scornful utterances, "yes, the words of the Lord shall indeed come from seemingly stammering lips and in a strange jargon, for He shall speak to you through your enemies, the Assyrians. There has been but one remedy for your safety,—your deliverance from the calamities threatening you; but one true 'rest,'—that of implicit faith in the Lord, not that of passive obedience to Assyria; but you would not heed God's words. And these warnings, so often repeated, which heeded would have saved you, shall be to you as a stumbling-block, and it shall be your doom to fall backward, and to be broken and snared and taken."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Improvement of social conditions of the working classes as a temperance reform measure.

2. The better drinking places are, the worse; and the worse they are, the better. *Horace Greeley.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the account of Solomon's worship at Gibeon and his prayer for wisdom, given in 2 Chron. 1. 2. What instances of dreams with a meaning were given in our lesson last year? (Gen. 15. 1; 28. 12; 37. 5–11; 40. 5–23; 41. 1–40.) 3. On what occasion was Saul disturbed because he was not answered by a dream? (1 Sam. 28. 6.) 4. If you were asked the question of verse 5, what would be your answer? 5. In what earlier lesson was the expression "to go out and come in" used? (Aug. 16.) What does it mean? 6. What is said about Solomon's wisdom in 1 Kgs. 4. 29–34? 7. What did Jesus say about Solomon's wisdom? (Luke 11. 31.) 8. On what occasion did Jesus speak of Solomon's glory? (Matt. 6. 28, 29.) 9. What are some of the characteristics of wisdom given in the Bible? (See the Subject-Index of your Bible.) 10. Look up the references in the Subject-Index of your Bible to *Wisdom, to be sought for,* and to *Wisdom, blessings attending it,* and select several golden texts for this lesson. 11. Commit to memory Prov. 3. 13–18.

LESSON X — DECEMBER 6

SOLOMON CHOOSES WISDOM

1 Kings 3. 4–15. (Read 1 Kings 2. 12–4. 34.) Commit vv. 11, 12.

Golden Text

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Prov. 9. 10.

LESSON TEXT 1 Kings 3. 4–15

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that *was* the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

5 In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne as *it is* this day.

7 And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child; I know not *how* to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who *is* able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

4. *High place.* "The Hebrew word is the ancient and technical name (found also on the Moabite Stone) of the local Canaanitish sanctuaries, which had been adopted by the Israelites and consecrated to the worship of Jehovah. Every town and village had such a place of sacrifice, situated on the 'height' on whose slope the town was built. (1 Sam. 9. 10 ff.)" *Skinner. That was the great high place.* Gibeon is thus called the chief high place probably because the tabernacle and the brazen altar were there at this time (2 Chron. 1. 3, 5), or because Gibeon was near Jerusalem. *A thousand burnt-*

offerings. There was a great assembly with Solomon (2 Chron. 1. 2, 3), and on this account probably, as well as to display his royal magnificence, the offerings were so abundant. *Did Solomon offer.* The priests were the sacrificers.

6. *Mercy.* R. V., *lovingkindness. Thou hast kept for him this great kindness.* R. V., *lovingkindness.* Solomon regards this giving him a successor in his own son as God's crowning kindness to David, even as had David (1 Kings 1. 48).

7. *I am but a little child.* This is an oriental hyperbole, expressing his appreciation of his want of experience. "Solomon, my son, is young and tender," said David when he began his preparations for the temple which his son should build. Josephus says that Solomon was only fourteen years old on his accession to the throne, but he further says that he reigned eighty years. Perhaps he was twenty years old. According to 1 Kings 14. 21 he already had a son. *I know not how to go out or come in.* A customary expression for ignorance of how to conduct affairs.

8. *Cannot be counted for multitude.* Possibly a reference to the promise made to Abraham, but a common expression for a great number (1 Kings 8. 5).

9. *Understanding.* R. V., margin, *hearing.* "A receptive mind, one that listens and considers before it decides." *Skinner. Bad.* R. V., *evil. That I may discern between good and evil.* That as judge I may decide between right and wrong, justice and injustice. *So great.* R. V., *great.*

11. *Discern.* R. V., margin, *hear. Judgment.* R. V., *justice.*

12. *Words.* R. V., *word. Was.* R. V., *hath been. None like thee.* Compare 1 Kings 4. 29–34.

13. *I have also given thee.* But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matt. 6. 33.) *If thou wilt walk in my ways.* Compare 1 Kings 11. 1–13. *As thy father David did walk.* David as king ever recognized the kingship of God. *I will lengthen thy days.* Solomon did not fulfill the condition; he was probably not over sixty at his death.

15. *Behold, it was a dream.* The same words are used of Pharaoh's dream (Gen. 41. 7). To us, the expression sounds as though all that had seemed to pass was unreal, but in Old Testament times men expected to learn God's will by dreams. Compare Saul's disappointment at not receiving a dream, 1 Sam. 28. 6. *Before the ark.* 2 Sam. 6. 12. *Made a feast to all his servants.* To partake of the peace-offerings.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

9. *Who is able to judge this thy great people?* As Solomon had surveyed the vast multitude which, from all parts of the country, had gathered at Gibeon, the difficulty must have painfully forced itself on him of wisely ruling over an empire so vast as that belonging to him, stretching from "the fords" on the western banks of the Euphrates, in the northeast, to Gaza on the border of Egypt in the southwest (1 Kings 4. 24). The conquests so lately made had not yet been consolidated; the means at the king's disposal were still comparatively scanty; tribal jealousies were scarcely appeased; and Solomon himself was young and wholly inexperienced. Any false step might prove fatal; even want of some brilliant success might disintegrate what was but imperfectly

welded together. On the other hand, had Israel's history not been a series of constant miracles, through the gracious interposition of the Lord? What then might Solomon not expect from His help? *Alfred Edersheim.*

12. *I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there hath been none like thee before thee.* Solomon's wisdom was that facile wit which is much admired in the Orient. The Hebrew historian adds that Solomon's keen observation and witticisms found expression in a great number of proverbial sayings and songs. He employed many comparisons drawn from nature — fables concerning the trees, beasts, and fishes — to impress and illustrate his brilliant deductions. This kind of wit is peculiarly acceptable to the oriental mind. When it fell from the lips of such a king as Solomon, there is little wonder that many came from afar to listen to him. Long after, when posterity had forgotten his follies, his sage maxims were cherished, and his reputation as the father of wisdom-thought steadily grew. In the succeeding centuries, proverbs of unknown authorship were naturally attributed to him. Since a proverb voices the common experiences of humanity, it is obvious that the name of one who first gave it definite expression, if known at first, is quickly forgotten; consequently, the collection of maxims which bore the general title "Proverbs of Solomon" rapidly increased in size. This point is well illustrated by the Book of Proverbs. Its general superscription suggests that the entire anthology came from the son of David; but a further investigation demonstrates, that, according to the testimony of the book itself, a large part came from other wise men. Chapter 22. 17 introduces a small group of maxims which are designated as the "words of the wise," and a still shorter collection "also from the wise" is preserved in 24. 23–34. In chapter 30, "the words of Agur," and in chapter 31, "the words of King Lemuel," are found. That some of the three thousand proverbs which the great king is reputed to have spoken are preserved in these anthologies is exceedingly probable. *Charles Foster Kent, History of the Hebrew People.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *The great high place.* Noah built an altar on the mountain on which the ark rested (Gen. 8. 20). Abraham on entering Canaan built an altar upon a mountain between Bethel and Hai (Gen. 12. 7, 8). To select a lofty place for worship was natural to oriental people. The Babylonians living in a flat country built artificial mounds on which they erected their temples. On the snow-covered summit of Hermon there are the ruins of a very ancient temple where Baal was worshipped. It was the custom of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Germans to sacrifice on the hills. We are told in the *Iliad* that the Trojans offered sacrifices to Zeus on Mount Ida. The Israelites were expressly commanded to destroy the high places of the Canaanites, where they worshipped their false gods, and lest they themselves should be led to idolatry, to the worship of separate "gods of the hills," the law given in Deut. 12. 13, 14 states: "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest; but in the place which Jehovah shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings."

9. *To judge thy people.* An oriental monarch is the chief justice as well as the king; to hear and decide cases is one of his chief duties. An instance of Solomon's wise judgment is given in the verses following this lesson, 16–28.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Gibeon was about six miles northwest of Jerusalem, a city assigned by Joshua to the tribe of Benjamin. In the 9th chapter of Joshua we read of the stratagem of the Gibeonites to secure a treaty with Joshua and the Israelites. Here the tabernacle and the brazen-altar for burnt-offerings were brought from their preceding resting place at Nob, and remained till removed to the temple by Solomon. On the north of Gibeon there is a river-bed now called by the Arabs Wady Sûleyman (Solomon), perhaps from Solomon's sacrifices at Gibeon.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

David's last words are given in the 23d chapter of 2 Samuel, and his last words to Solomon are recorded in 1 Kings 2. 1–9. Full of days, riches and honor, David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. The first recorded acts of Solomon the King are his removals of his enemies. In three years' time Adonijah was put to death; Abiathar was deposed from the priesthood and his place given to Zadok; Joab was slain clinging to the horns of the altar to which he had fled, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was given his position; and Shimei, who cursed David when he fled from Absolom, was condemned to remain in Jerusalem all his life, and was slain when he went to Gath in search of two run-away servants. Solomon's marriage to the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh is recorded.

It is not possible to give a strictly chronological arrangement of Solomon's reign. The event of to-day's lesson would seem to have occurred in the first year of his reign.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. I wish each of you to think of some one whom you admire very much, so much that you would choose to be like him if you could. Charles, what makes you admire the one you have in mind? Why would you, John, like to become like the one whom you admire? Of course you have read fables in which the choice of all good things has been offered to some one; if that choice were yours, Edward, what would you choose? There is a story told about the choice of Hercules, who was the most famous of all the heroes of Grecian mythology. Two beautiful maidens called upon him in his youth, one named Pleasure and the other Virtue; the first one offered him a life of ease and delight, and the other a life of usefulness and fame. Hercules chose Virtue, and spent the greater part of his life in doing things to help weaker people with his wonderful strength. Two thousand years ago this story of Xenophon's about Hercules' choice delighted the people, for every one likes to see the right choice made between two possible opportunities. The most famous wrong choice ever made in real life is that of the rich young ruler who came to Christ and asked Him what he must do to gain eternal life. Who can tell us what was his choice? (Matt. 19. 21, 22.) The most famous right choice is the subject of our lesson to-day.

For Older Pupils. In former times the Kings of Persia heard on awakening each morning the voice of a priest calling to them and saying: "Master,

arise and consider for what purpose God has placed you on the throne." This was the thought that had engrossed the mind of the youthful Solomon in the early days after he ascended his father's throne. He had meditated on the greatness of his father David, on the size and importance of his realm, on his own inexperience and the responsibilities before him, and on his great need of divine help, if he were to rule wisely as he then longed to do. All this is shown in his dream, for dreams are influenced by the thoughts of the waking hours. We do not dream of what we know nothing of, but of what we are interested in, just as Pharaoh's butler dreamed of Pharaoh's cup, and his baker of his baskets of white bread and baked food.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Noble Choices

Solomon's Choice. God appeared to Solomon in a dream by night and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Before Solomon's fancy there must have been spread the happiness in riches, the delight in power, the glory in fame,

Holbein's Representation of Solomon Asking for Wisdom

all the golden possibilities before a young ruler just established on a great throne. What should he ask for? "Let me be wise," was his wish, wise to rule his realm rightly, possessed of an understanding heart to judge between good and evil. "And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing."

A thousand years later a Greater than Solomon was taken by the devil unto an exceeding high mountain, and shown all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and the devil said unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. What was Christ's choice? "Get thee hence, Satan;" He said, "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil departed from Him for a season; and behold, the angels came and ministered unto Him.

Youth the Time to choose. At a dinner party in New York a Californian happened to mention the annual yield of some of the richest gold and silver mines in the Pacific States, when a quiet old man beside him said:

"When I was a lad, I accompanied my father, who was sent by the government to treat with a tribe of Indians in California. On the way we encamped for a week in what is now the State of Nevada upon a certain bleak hillside. I might have bought the whole hill for ten dollars, but I slept and ate and amused myself, and paid no attention to the sterile ground beneath. My barren hill was the site of the famous Comstock lode, which has yielded hundreds of millions in silver and gold. To think that it all might have been mine if I had dug but a little way below the surface, as other men coming after me had the luck to do."

Every boy in the world encamps on a certain hillside; he sleeps, eats and amuses himself thereon. Long after, when he grows old and his lot in life is fixed, he is apt to look back upon that hillside of youth, and see how full it was of golden nuggets. Other men found them while he played.

This one dug for knowledge, which brought him fortune; that one gained the material there for a high and enduring fame; still another found ties and friendships which made all his after life sweet and beautiful. But the boy who was satisfied to live on the surface, to care only for the next meal or the next game, left youth behind, a barren tract, whose gold had all been hidden from his eye.

You — the boy who reads these words — still stand on the hillside. Beneath you is not a barren soil, but measureless wealth. You may take away with you out of this mine of youth, the trade, the profession, the acuteness which, if you have adequate natural gifts, may make you many times a millionaire; or you may take the simple tastes and habits which will command for you a healthy, happy life. You may find affections which will endure until death; or you may acquire vices which will taint your body and soul for all time.

More than all, it is on that height of youth that God speaks to each man the words which, if he takes them with him, will give him victory and peace, not only in this life, but in the life hereafter. What will you carry away? Now is the time to choose. *The Youth's Companion.*

The Best Choice. If God says to us, in the bright promise of youth, "Ask what I shall give thee," let us make the best choice, and answer: "Give me grace to know Thy Son, the Christ, and to grow like Him"; for that is the true wisdom which leads to eternal life, and that is the true royalty which brings dominion over self, and that is the true happiness which flows unsought from fellowship with the Divine Life. *Henry van Dyke, Sermons to Men.*

II Helpful Wisdom

Knowledge and Wisdom. To know is not to be wise. To be wise is to know how to use knowledge. Webster defines wisdom as knowledge *and the capacity to use it.* It was wisdom, not knowledge, that Solomon asked for, "understanding to discern justice," knowledge that he could use in ruling his people. We say that knowledge is power; we mean that wisdom is power. Many books read, many facts stored away in the memory, may make one well-informed, but may not make one wise.

When Lincoln was elected president, a college professor who knew that

Lincoln had had no "schooling," said that it would be necessary for some trained statesman to write his messages and speeches for him. Yet Lincoln was wise, if not learned in book lore, and his own messages and speeches are now treasured among the best of all literature in all lands.

Knowledge is for Use. "If I should have one foot in the grave, I should still wish to learn," said Seneca. No one has ever learned so much that he could not wish to learn more. There are some boys and girls who look eagerly forward to the time when they shall have finished school and shall be through with studying, but fortunately the time never comes when the mind is through with learning. No one could ever put a sign on his forehead, "Full," no more wisdom can enter here, as the Paris omnibus conductor hangs out his sign, "*Complet*,"—no more passengers can enter.

Since there is no limit to the realm of knowledge, there must be choice in the kind of knowledge each one acquires. While it is true that we can never tell what knowledge will prove of use to us, and therefore should be eager to make our own whatever knowledge we can, yet as in high school and college we must choose certain subjects because we can not study all subjects, so it is with all our learning, it must be a matter of choice what knowledge we shall especially seek. The lawyer may not devote much time to the study of medicine, and the physician may not spend many hours a day in the study of law.

In the post-graduate department of every university there is some student who has a genius for acquiring knowledge but not for acquiring wisdom, for he has no ability for ever making his knowledge useful. Some of the most useless people in the world are those who are "equipped" with school, college, university and post-graduate courses taken here and abroad. Of what value are your possessions whether material or intellectual, if you do not know how to use them? Just as some people see but seem to see not, and hear but hear not, so there are those who know and yet know not. The literal meaning of the Hebrew word an "understanding" heart, in verse 9 of our lesson, as the margin of our Revised Version states, is a "hearing" heart, a heart that is listening to the inspiration and guidance of God.

Divinely-given Wisdom. Cyrus W. Field was a wise man. In his boyhood he determined that he would do something to benefit mankind. He had the ability to acquire wealth, and he strove zealously toward that end, purposing to use his wealth for others. He amassed a quarter of a million dollars, in his early days deemed a great fortune, and then gave up business that he might devote the rest of his life to philanthropic service. Suddenly his fortune was swept away, and he went to work and secured another one. When a second time he had retired from business, and was looking for the best opportunity by which he could carry out the purpose of his life, he became interested in the project of laying the Atlantic cable. Perhaps there has been no greater contribution to the progress of civilization that has been more beset with obstacles and discouragements than was this great project. In 1856 Mr. Field organized the Atlantic Telegraph Company, and furnished one-fourth of the funds. The United States and British Governments furnished ships. Two expeditions proved failures, and a cable laid by the third expedition worked but a short time. It could not be done, every one declared. After ten years a fourth cable was laid a distance of 1,200 miles, and then broke and was lost. The year after, 1866, it was picked up in mid-ocean and completed. "What hath God wrought?" was the first message sent over the first public telegraph

line, the one between Washington and Baltimore. The wisdom that enabled Mr. Field to accomplish the laying of the Atlantic cable was divinely given, just as much as was the "understanding heart" given to Solomon.

III The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

The Source of Wisdom.

Whence then cometh wisdom?
And where is the place of understanding?
God understandeth the way thereof,
And he knoweth the place thereof.
And unto man he said,
Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding. Job 28.20, 23, 28.

The Wisdom that is Possible for All. When "I will be wise" meant "I will reach the final principles of things by reasoning and meditation" it was a resolution which only a few choice, privileged spirits in each generation of the world could make. When "I will be wise" had come to mean "I will obey God and come near to Him, or let Him come near to me by my obedience," it was a resolution which was open to all men, the weakest and the humblest, as well as the strongest and highest, to make. The little child just putting a trembling foot on to the margin of the vast plain of life; the plough-boy busy at his work without a rest for thought from morning till night, from year to year, the practical man strong in affairs but with no gift for abstract speculation, the poor, sick woman with no strength left but just to suffer — this new change of the Gospel threw open the gates of wisdom to them all. Then all could be wise. Wisdom not as a luxury, not as an ornament, but as a transformation, a regeneration, an illumination of their lives — this was within the power of them all when the road into wisdom became obedience and obedience itself was made to be the knowledge of and likeness to the God whom the soul obeyed.

"Wise unto salvation" is the Bible phrase for this. Think what significance there is in these familiar words. Wisdom that shines as a star in the forehead, wisdom that wraps the form with dignity like a rich mantle, wisdom that burns in eloquence upon the lips, these all men can not have. If these are the true successes of a human life, then most human lives must be failures. But wisdom that enters as salvation into the heart, all men may have. Hear how St. James describes it, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." These are not easy things indeed, but they are things not impossible for any man. *Phillips Brooks, New Starts.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

We are such stuff as dreams are made on. *Shakespeare.*

Man is an ignoramus athirst for knowledge. *Charles Wagner.*

Opportunity with ability makes responsibility. *Bishop Hunt.*

To be in one mind with God is universal knowledge in embryo. *Christina Rossetti.*

The most learned are not the wisest. *Dutch Saying.*

The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that. *Carlyle.*

A great end must be wooed with industrious thought and patient renunciation of small desires. *George Eliot.*

There is no good in praying for anything unless you will also try for it; all the sighs and supplications in the world will not bring wisdom to the heart that fills itself with folly every day. *Henry van Dyke.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. John 16. 23.

Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Matt. 6. 33.

So teach us to number our days
That we may get us a heart of wisdom. Psa. 90. 12.

There is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Job 32. 8.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom.
And the man that getteth understanding.
For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver,
And the profit thereof than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies;
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her.
Prov. 3. 13–15.

The prince that lacketh understanding is also a great oppressor. Prov. 28. 16.

Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom . . . but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah. Jer. 9. 23, 24.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

At the beginning of his reign, Solomon thought of his position as a responsibility for others, not as an opportunity for himself. Every one's life, however humble, has great possibilities and tremendous responsibilities. Am I rightly conscious of mine?

"In the bright lexicon of youth there is no such word as fail." This is well, but the natural hopefulness and confidence of youth needs to be leavened by Solomon's appreciation of the greatness of his duties and of his own inexperience, and above all, by his consciousness of his need of divine help.

With what filial reverence Solomon speaks of his father, as one who walked before God in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart. Do we who can also say this of our parents, rightly appreciate this great blessing?

To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. Though Solomon was divinely endowed with wisdom, the responsibility of living wisely was his alone, and here he failed miserably.

We who are at the threshold of life are making our choice of what our lives shall be, whether lives self-centered, or God-centered. What is my choice?

I will zealously seek to obtain such wisdom that I shall trust in the Lord with all my heart, and lean not upon mine own understanding, in all my ways acknowledging Him, strong in the confidence that He will direct my paths, being not wise in mine own eyes, but fearing the Lord and departing from evil.

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

At the beginning of Solomon's reign the ark rested in a temporary tent erected for it by David on Mount Zion, but the tabernacle of the wilderness wanderings was at Gibeon, "the great high place." To Gibeon Solomon went attended by a vast retinue, there to solemnize his accession to the throne by a great sacrifice. A thousand victims were offered by Zadok, the high priest, on the altar of burnt offerings. That night when the smoke had rolled away and the music had ceased, Solomon slept, and in a prophetic dream held communion with Jehovah. "Ask what I shall give thee," said the Lord. In Solomon's answer he referred to God's kindness to David his father, whose heart was right toward God, in permitting him to be followed on the throne by his son, and then he acknowledged his own inexperience and the difficulty of the task before him of ruling so great a people. He chose as his gift, not earthly greatness, but wisdom to discharge his duties aright. His choice pleased the Lord, because his wish had not been for his own aggrandizement, and He promised him not only wisdom to discern justice, but riches and honor and, if he continued to keep God's commandments, long life as well.

On his return to Jerusalem Solomon offered sacrifices before the ark, and made a feast for his people. An instance of his wise judgment is given in the case of the two mothers with the dead and the living babe, each of whom claimed the child that was alive. Solomon ordered the babe cut in two and half given to each, and discerned the true mother in the one who was unwilling to have the child slain. "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The three books of the Bible usually ascribed to Solomon: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Solomon. The nobler the truth or sentiment, says Emerson, the less imports the question of authorship.

2. Solomon's relations with other countries.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the accounts of the building and dedication of the temple in 2 Kgs., chaps. 5–8 and 2 Chron., chaps. 5–7. 2. Write an account of the temple, giving the length of time taken to build it, the material used, the source of the material, the builders, the plan of the building, the size and shape of the apartments, the furnishings of each, the ornamentation, and the vessels for the building and the court. 3. Write an account of the dedication of the temple. 4. What are some of the earlier references to the Shekinah? (Ex. 14. 24; 24. 16; 40. 35.) 5. What was the condition on which the temple should continue as the house of God? (1 Kgs. 9. 1–9.) 6. Where did we learn in an earlier lesson that God should be worshipped? (John 4. 21–24.) 7. What is said about God's dwelling place in Acts 7. 46–50 and 1 Cor. 3.16? 8. When did Jesus use the word *temple* to refer to Himself, and how was the saying perverted and used against Him? (John 2. 19–22; Matt. 26. 61; 27. 40.)

LESSON XI — DECEMBER 13

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

1 Kings 8. (Read 1 Kings 5–8.) Commit vv. 10, 11.

Golden Text

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Psa. 122. 1.

LESSON TEXT 1 Kings 8. 1–11

1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which *is* Zion.

2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month.

3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

4 And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, *were* with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy *place, even* under the wings of the cherubim.

7 For the cherubim spread forth *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

8 And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy *place* before the oracle, and they were not seen without; and there they are unto this day.

9 *There was* nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord,

11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The elders of Israel.* Our word *senate* (Latin, *senatus*) comes from the Latin *senex, an old man,* and means *a council of old men. The chief of the fathers' houses.* R. V., *the princes of the fathers' houses. Might bring.* R. V., *to bring.*

2. *The feast.* The feast of tabernacles began on the fifteenth of the seventh month, and lasted seven days, Lev. 23. 34. *The seventh month.* It corresponded to our month of October.

4. *The tabernacle of the congregation.* R. V., *the tent of meeting.* Not the temporary tent on Mt. Zion erected by David, but the Tent of the Wanderings from Gibeon. *Those.* R. V., *these.*

5. *Sacrificing sheep and oxen.* It is thought that they were offered at dif-

ferent places on the route, as on the occasion when David removed the ark to Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 6. 13. *Told.* R. V., *counted.*

6. *His place.* R. V., *its place.* The Holy of Holies. *Cherubims.* R. V., *Cherubim.* See their description in 1 Kings 6. 23–28.

7. *Two wings.* R. V., *wings.*

8. *They drew out the staves.* R. V., *the staves were so long. Out in the holy place.* R. V., *from the holy place. They were not seen without.* They were visible at the doorway between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, but not from the other end of the Holy Place towards the porch. *There they are unto this day.* This remark indicates that it was written while the temple was still standing, and incorporated by the compiler of the books of Kings, who wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple. See 2 Kings 25. 8, 9.

9. *Nothing save the two tables of stone.* In Heb. 9. 4 we read, "Wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." We may assume from the next verse, which says, "Of which things we can not now speak severally" that this was hastily and incorrectly written, and the pot of manna and the rod never were in the ark, or that they were lost during the ark's sojourn among the Philistines.

10. *The cloud.* The visible token of the presence of the Lord. See Ex. 29. 43; 40. 34. "It produced in the minds of all the nation the thought that God had come down into the temple, and was gladly tabernacled therein." *Josephus.*

11. *To minister.* The altar of incense was in the Holy Place. *Because of.* R. V., *by reason of. Had filled.* R. V., *filled.* See Ex. 40. 35.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

6. *The ark of the covenant.* What we call History says that the ark was destroyed when the Babylonians set fire to the temple, and declares as a certainty that the ark was not contained in the second temple. Perhaps not. We need not be curious about the merely material ark. The ark may be taken as symbolical of Divine presence, or the divine plan in human life. It was a visible form of an invisible Power. And yet we are not left without a visible sign of God's presence. So long as we have the Bible we have the ark of the covenant. The most terrible yet the most gentle of all books is the Bible! Law is in it, and mercy. It plagues the house and blesses it, as the house of Obed-edom was blessed when he received the ark of the Lord into his dwelling. It throws down the Dagon of false worship, of dishonest trade, of false appearances. *Joseph Parker, The City Temple Pulpit.*

11. *The glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah.* The temple was to all the Jewish people the dwelling-place of God — of the God who had been with them when they were in the desert; who had brought them forth from Egypt and led them at last in safety into the Promised Land; the God who had fought their battles, and won their victories for them, and who had been from the very beginning in all their history. This was to be His dwelling-place, His palace on the earth, His seat, His throne, from which He would give His orders, and issue His decrees and mold and shape the national life and try to make it more and more the embodiment of Himself. They felt that they were helping to build on earth a home for God, and that all the offerings which they made for the temple and its furnishings were made to God.

Used by Courtesy of M. De Brunoff

Copyright, 1904

SOLOMON DEDICATING THE TEMPLE—*Tissot*

And what those people in that old time tried to do in their way, you and I and all of us should try to do in ours. We are not merely to build houses of worship for God. We are to build factories, and warehouses, and produce exchanges, and railways, and shops, and banks, for God. Or rather, we are to see and feel that these and the activities they represent, our industrial works and employments in connection with them, our social and professional engagements, our buying and selling of goods, our practising of medicine, our arguing of cases in court, our going out to parties and evening receptions, our meeting together in club-houses — to see and to feel that the whole of our complex and growing civilization, our diversified social life with all its varied equipment, is not *our* temple merely — to contribute to our comfort and to minister to our pride — but something very much more. We should recognize the fact that our manifold civilization is chiefly the temple of God — that the purpose of God is in it, pervades it. Certainly we can not be wrong in thinking that it is God's purpose to make this world His dwelling place, and that it is His joy and should also be our task to help to make it such. That, it seems to me, is what you and I are here for. *David H. Greer, From Things to God.*

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On Mount Moriah, the hill in Jerusalem having the Valley of the Kidron on the east and the Tyropœan Valley on the west, an ample space for the temple was made level by building up vast substructures, (portions of which are still standing to-day), and filling in the deep inequalities with "hewed stones." Here, on the rock now crowned by "The Dome of the Rock" (often called the Mosque of Omar), the temple was erected. This is the spot, according to tradition, where Abraham's faith was tried in the offering of Isaac, and here David had his vision of the angel of pestilence on the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite King. 1 Chron. 21.

The first verse of our lesson speaks of bringing up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. The traditional view has been that Mt. Zion was the hill now so-called, the southwestern hill of Jerusalem, west of the Tyropœan Valley, the highest hill of the city; in this case the adverb "up" could be used in the sense that the procession had to descend Mt. Zion and then ascend Mt. Moriah. Recent scholarship holds that David built his city on the site of the old fortress of the Jebusites, the southern and lowest spur of the eastern hill. It is thought that Zion was the name for the whole eastern ridge, whose three separate peaks were called from north to south Moriah, Ophel, and City of David. On Mt. Moriah was the temple; on Ophel, the royal palace and other magnificent buildings within the wall that enclosed the temple area, and on the southern spur, the city of David.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the three preceding chapters of 1 Kings and in 2 Chronicles 2–4, are narrated Solomon's league with Hiram, King of Tyre, by which he obtained timber and laborers for the temple, his levy of Israelite laborers to prepare the timber and stones, and a description of the temple; his building of the royal palace, and other buildings; and an account of all Hiram's work in brass for the temple — the pillars, altar, molten sea, lavers, etc. — and a summary of its golden vessels.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. There are wonderful cathedrals in various parts of the world which are the pride and glory of the people possessing them, but no people anywhere have ever been so loyally devoted to any building as the Jews have been to their temple. While it was standing, three times a year, and especially at the passover season, long trains of pilgrims came from every part of Palestine and from distant countries to worship in its courts. At the present time, every Friday in Jerusalem, many Jews go to the western wall of the enclosure round about the sacred spot where their temple stood, and there they recall its glories and weep and wail over its destruction. The place is called "The Jew's Wailing Place," because of this custom.

What king first thought of building here a magnificent temple? What were his reasons for wishing to build it? Why was he not permitted to carry out his wish? What promises were made to him that more than consoled him for having to give up his wish?

For Older Pupils. The Spaniards consider their great church of the Escurial a likeness of Solomon's temple, and in front they have erected six colossal statues of the kings of Judah who were associated with the erection and restoration of the Jewish temple; "David, the Proposer; Solomon, the Founder; Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Manasseh, the successive Purifiers and Restorers."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Solomon's Temple

Its Materials. David had made a contract with Hiram, King of Tyre, to supply the greater part of the materials for the temple which his son should erect. Stones, cedar, cypress, and sandalwoods were drawn down from the slopes of Lebanon to the coast, then transported a hundred miles on rafts to Joppa, and then drawn thirty-five miles eastward to Jerusalem. A part of the stones were hewn out of the "Royal Caverns" on the mountain slope of Jerusalem itself. "If you go to Jerusalem," says a recent traveler, "they will show you how the temple was made without sound of hammer or click of chisel. Close by the Damascus gate they will point to a little door and a passage beneath and through the wall. If you pass down and over the rubbish which the ruinous centuries have heaped together, you will find immense subterranean quarries. There is the rough roof of limestone fifty feet above your head. On you go through the silence and darkness lighted only by the torch you hold in your hand, till you reach the limit, where, if you could pass up through, you might come to the foundations of Pilate's judgment-hall or the tower of Antonia. There you see the shelves where the workmen placed their lamps, the chips and waste of their labor, the half-wrought blocks, the narrow channels cut in the rock, in which the wooden wedges were to be driven wet, that their expansion might break off the mass; you see where the stones of the great temple area were wrought. You are far from all life; the stone-cutters of ancient days could work in freedom; no one could hear them. It was a noisy life to the laborer, but no sound could be heard on Moriah."

Its Structure. For our knowledge of the details of the temple we are in

part indebted to Ezekiel, the prophet-priest who had himself served in the old sanctuary before he was carried away into exile. His visions, therefore, of the new temple which was to be reared, were largely suggested by his memories of the old.

The general outlines of the temple are distinctly drawn in the narrative in 1 Kings. At the western end of the sacred structure was a cubical enclosure about thirty-five feet square; this was the heart of the temple, for it was set apart as the dwelling place of Jehovah, and was known as the Oracle. By later generations it was appropriately called the Holy of Holies. The Ark, the symbol of Jehovah's presence, was placed in the center; and on either side, towering seventeen feet high, stood the cherubim, made of olive-wood and overlaid with gold. Their outstretched wings were each about nine feet in width, and touched the wall on either side, meeting in the center over the Ark; in form and significance they probably correspond to the great collossi

The Wings of the Cherubim

which guarded the entrances to the ancient Assyrian palaces. The references to Jehovah "who dwelleth in thick darkness" (1 Kings 8.12) suggest that the Oracle was lighted only as the olive-wood doors were opened which led into the larger room in front. The latter corresponded to an audience-chamber in the palace of an earthly king; it was of the same width as the Oracle, but about fifty feet in height and seventy in length. The walls of the temple were of hewn-stone, and according to Ezekiel, about ten feet in thickness on the ground, and on the outside a cubit less for each higher story. Light was admitted into the outer sanctuary by windows on both sides placed close up under the ceiling; the roof was probably flat, and projected so as to keep the rain from beating in through these apertures. Immediately in front of the entrance to the Oracle stood the little altar of cedar-wood, on which was placed the shewbread. Great square doors led from the large audience-room to the porch, which was of the same width as the temple, and about sixteen feet in length. At the entrance stood two huge, hollow, bronze pillars, about thirty feet high and nearly six feet in diameter.

Immediately in front of the temple, which faced the east, was placed the large bronze altar which was used for the sacrifices. Near by, to supply the water needful for purification, stood the great brazen sea, which was nearly

nine feet high and over fifty feet in circumference; it was supported by twelve bronze oxen. On three sides of the temple was built a series of chambers, three stories in height; the entrance was from the south side. Stairs led up from the lower to the higher rooms, which were used for storing the wardrobes of the priests and the vessels employed in the ritualistic service. *Charles Foster Kent, History of the Hebrew People.*

Its Splendor. Compared with the religious buildings of Assyria, Babylon, or Egypt, a structure like the temple, apart from its vast substructions, was hardly worthy of notice, either for its size or splendor. The great temple of Amon, at Thebes, for example, ultimately extended to a length of one thousand, one hundred and seventy feet, while the ruins of its associated edifices still cover a plateau nearly four miles in circumference. Nor is the contrast between the simplicity of the Israelite temple and the splendor of those on the Nile less striking. Its exterior seems to have been entirely plain, and though there was a pillared porch, it shrank into insignificance before the long avenues of mighty columns of Egyptian sanctuaries, the alleys of sphinxes, the obelisks, and the vast pylons, all, in common with the temples themselves, covered with sculpture and ornament. But the lavish employment of gold for the decoration of the interior of Solomon's building exceeds anything told us of other ancient temples. Israel was still wholly dependent on foreign artistic skill, and at the same time, was rigidly excluded from whatever even remotely pointed to the heathen ideas which were then the basis of all art. Only innocent details could be sanctioned, the bas-reliefs of palms and flowers, the forms of lions and oxen, and the mystical shapes of the winged cherubim were the widest range of invention or fancy permitted. Even in those, Phenician art, borrowed from Assyria, may be traced, for the ruins of Nineveh still disclose allied conceptions and style of ornament.

The cherubim there were of olive-wood, plated with the finest gold. The door into the Holy of Holies was secured by golden chains passing across and fastened to the walls. A thick curtain of blue, purple, and crimson, on a white ground of the finest linen, covered with figures of cherubim, hung outside the doors of the Holy of Holies, to screen it from all eyes.

In the Holy Place stood a table covered with plates of gold, but instead of the single seven-branched candlestick of the Tabernacle, ten separate lamps of gold were placed, five on the north and five on the south side, the snuffers, tongs and snuff dishes being also of pure gold.

The inner walls of the whole building were adorned throughout with cherubim, palms, and carved work of lilies, in stalk and leaf and flower. The walls were also enriched with precious stones. *Cunningham Geikie, Hours with the Bible.*

Its Significance. The temple of Jehovah was a shrine rather than a church. It was entered only by the priests and ministers anointed for the purpose of serving there, never by the rest of the Israelites, who worshipped in the court without. Its glory and fame above that of all the great temples of Egypt, Babylon, India, and Rome, lay, not in its magnificence, but in its meaning as the house of the Lord. In his dedicatory prayer, Solomon questions: "Will God in very deed dwell on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens can not contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded!" And again, "Hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place; yea, hear Thou in

heaven Thy dwelling-place; and when Thou hearest, forgive." The Oracle could not contain God, Solomon knew, yet it was God's room, and for centuries the lesson was impressed on the Jewish nation of God's presence in that Holy of Holies, where none but the high priest might enter and he only once a year with the blood of an offering, "the Holy Spirit thus signifying, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest."

II I WAS GLAD WHEN THEY SAID UNTO ME, LET US GO UNTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

The Meaning of the Golden Text to us. This great Psalm (122, from which the text is taken) is not a plea for public worship. To the men who sang it no such plea was needed; the necessity for such a plea has been left to times like ours. Worship should be not so much a duty as a joy.

The city in which we worship is seldom fragrant with historic and religious memories; the church in which we gather is not the single rallying point of the body of believers whose hope and faith we share. Our worship is not particularly associated with national or patriotic feelings. It has not that splendid concentration of religious, patriotic and historical interest which it had for the ancient Jew. But that only makes our task the harder. Our need is as imperative, and our joy should be as deep.

The tribes go up to give thanks to the name of Jehovah. And this has a very important lesson for our own time. Worship is a duty which is not discharged in its totality when we faithfully discharge all our moral obligations. Morality, though essential to religion, is less than religion; there must be a direct fellowship of the spirit of men with the spirit of God. A man who confines himself to what he calls his duty, and never cares to take upon his lips the language of the 103d Psalm, has the alphabet of religion yet to learn. The heart which does not throb in response to the quaintly simple expression of the Psalmist's joy in worship has yet to learn the deepest things in religion. *J. E. McFadyen, The Messages of the Psalms.*

The Fellowship of Worship. Is it not an uplifting thought that we are embraced in that great fellowship which, under various names the whole world over, is engaged in the worship and the service of our common Lord? In great cathedrals, in frontier churches by the cross-roads, and under the banyan trees in pagan lands, they are bending in devotion to Him.

And what of those who abide without? Is it not a dreary thing to stand alone in the great struggle? To feel that you have no part nor lot in this great brotherhood, this co-operative guild of prayer and sympathy? The Ancient Mariner speaks of his weary years of wandering thus:

O wedding guest! This soul hath been
Alone, on a wide, wide sea,
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

But the days of his loneliness are over. He has found the pleasant companionship of God's people and with it strength and comfort unspeakable:

O, sweeter that the marriage-feast
'Tis sweeter far to me
To walk together to the kirk
With the goodly company!

David James Burrell, The Spirit of the Age.

III Ye are a Temple of God

Let in the Spirit of God. Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? wrote Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. Those Corinthians had magnificent temples, and this figure of Paul's would tell them that they, being made in the image of God, were as much nobler than the beautiful buildings as the Great Architect was greater than their architects. We know what the meaning of Solomon's temple was to the Israelites, it was God's dwelling place, and therefore their glory and delight; should not we ourselves, in whom the Spirit of God may dwell, delight to receive Him?

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says that at a great meeting in Manchester, England, Holman Hunt's beautiful picture of Christ Knocking at the Door was thrown upon a screen. "Why don't they let Him in?" a twelve-year-old boy excitedly asked his father. "I suppose they don't want to," his father answered, but that did not satisfy the boy. "O no, it can't be that; any one would want to let Him in," he said, and then he added: "O, it's because they're living at the back of the house." Mr. Morgan explains that the front rooms of the working people's homes are treated as too good for common use, and are kept closed, the family living in the back of the house, so that it was plain to this boy that they could not hear Christ knocking at the front.

Do we not live too much at the back of our houses, caring for the lesser good things of life, and so keeping the better parts of our nature closed to the best things, that we do not hear Christ knocking and do not let Him enter?

Keep the Temple in Order. How many girls remember that to each one of them has been given a dwelling, which is entrusted to her exclusive care, and which no one but herself can cleanse or keep in order? It matters little whose hands sweep or dust the room in which she sleeps and eats. But that inner chamber in which the soul dwells she alone can keep in order.

Does she examine it every morning, to sweep out the vulgarity, the malice, the indolent indifference to God and His truth which she may find there? She does not open her house at night for noxious insects and foul birds to harbor in it. Does she thrust out with equal zeal all trivial thoughts and gossip, with their malignant sting, from that most secret chamber?

She may live in a hut or in a palace. But that place in which her soul dwells is unseen by mortal eye. It is her work to keep it clean and pure as long as life lasts. When her body is carried out dead, her neighbors will enter and see her earthly house. But God alone, looking upon that secret dwelling, will judge what her soul and life have been. *The Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple nobler than the last
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast.

O. W. Holmes.

There is one temple whereof I am custodian and votaress; of its services, devotions, worship, I alone shall have to render an account. *Christina Rossetti.*

Do not draw a line of separation between the house of God and the house of business: the counting-house and the shop may be as much the house of God as the holiest shrine where generations have knelt in prayer. *F. B. Meyer.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

There I will meet with the children of Israel; and the Tent shall be sanctified by my glory. Ex. 29. 43.

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these. Jer. 7. 3, 4.

Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Isa. 66. 1.

Except Jehovah build the house,
They labor in vain that build it. Psa. 127. 1.

Them that honor me I will honor. 1 Sam. 2. 30.

My soul longeth, yea, even thirsteth for the courts of Jehovah;
My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God. Psa. 84. 2.

The hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. . . . The true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth. John 4. 21, 23.

Who then offereth willingly to consecrate himself this day unto Jehovah? 1 Chron. 29. 5.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Said a great king once, "Where I sleep, there is the palace." Each one of us may say, Where I am, there is God's temple. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount" were the words ringing in the ears of Moses as he came down Mount Sinai to become the architect of God's dwelling place, the tent of worship. We have had a pattern given us; if we model our lives upon Christ's life, God will dwell in us.

The tables of the law in the ark of the covenant were a constant reminder that God's promises to be with His people depended on their keeping His laws. "If a man love Me, he will keep My word;" said Christ, "And My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." The indwelling of the Spirit in our human temples depends upon our obedience to His words.

When the Sabbath bells ring out their invitation to go to the house of the Lord, do I always accept with gladness?

When Sir Christopher Wren was constructing St. Pauls Cathedral in London he had notices posted about the building that any workman heard taking the name of God in vain would be instantly dismissed. Are we as careful to keep sacred our temples of God?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The foundation stone of the temple was laid in May of the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and the building was completed in November of the eleventh year. In October of the year following, at the time of the feast of the taber-

nacles, it was solemnly dedicated. As the bringing up of the ark to the city of David had been the greatest day in David's reign, so now the dedication of the temple was the culminating glory of Solomon's. From all parts of the realm the people were gathered at the capital. The chief men of the nation Solomon assembled to bring from Gibeon the ancient tent of meeting with its sacred vessels, and from its temporary tent on Mount Zion the ark of the covenant. Sacrifices without number celebrated the last journey of the ark. The priests brought it into the Oracle, the Holy of Holies, and placed it under the outstretched wings of the cherubim, so that one standing near the doorway between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place could see the ends of the staves by which the ark was carried, but they were invisible to one as far away as the length of the Holy Place. Within the ark there was no representation of God, nothing but the two tables of stone on which were engraved the ten commandments, placed there by Moses at Horeb. The priests came out and took up their position between the porch and the altar, opposite them stood the great chorus of white-robed musicians and singers, round about were the innumerable throng of spectators, and seated upon a brazen platform was King Solomon surrounded by his guard of five hundred men, each with his shield of gold. As the priests left the Holy Place "a cloud filled the house, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" and "the mighty chorus lifted up their voice and praised the Lord for He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever." Then Solomon arose, solemnly blessed the people, and uttered a dedicatory prayer and then closed with another benediction. The sacrifice of multitudes of sheep and oxen followed. For seven days the "dedication of the altar" lasted, and the feast of the tabernacles seven other days. Finally the king dismissed the people to their homes, "Joyful and glad of heart for the goodness that Jehovah had showed unto David and Solomon, and to Israel His people."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. One soweth, another reapeth.

2. The worth of the human temples. In a number of the *Arena,* George Taylor, the artist, has a picture entitled, *The Temples of God,* in which he has portrayed a magnificent cathedral, and in its shadow asleep on the cold pavement he has depicted six ragged, emaciated, "houseless children of God."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What king of Israel had tended his flock in the same region as the shepherds about whom the next lesson speaks? 2. How long did David live before the time of Jesus? (About a thousand years.) 3. Is Luke's account of Jesus' birth given also in any other Gospel? 4. Read Luke 1. 1–2. 7; Matthew 1. 18–25. 5. Review the first lesson of the year. 6. Who was emperor of the Roman world at the time of Jesus' birth, and what decree had he issued? (Luke 2. 1, 2.) 7. What city is meant by "the city of David" in verse 11? (See verse 4.) Why was it so called? (1 Samuel 16. 1, 4, 13.) 8. What city was usually meant by "the city of David"? (See this lesson.) 9. What does the word *Christ* mean? 10. What gifts did the Wise Men bring Jesus? (Matthew 2. 11.) 11. What Christmas gift should we give to Him? (2 Cor. 8. 5.)

LESSON XII — DECEMBER 20

CHRISTMAS LESSON

Luke 2. 8–20. Commit vv. 8–10.

Golden Text

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2. 11.

LESSON TEXT Luke 2. 8–20

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.
10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.
13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.
16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.
18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.
19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.
20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *In the same country.* The neighborhood of Bethlehem. See verse 4. *By night.* R. V. margin, *night watches.* The shepherds took their turn at watching.

9. *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them.* R. V., *And an angel of the Lord stood by them.* The words of the Revised Version suggest the thought, not that the angel "came" to the shepherds, but that the shepherds were suddenly given the power to perceive the presence of the angel. *The glory of the Lord.* The Shekinah, or cloud of overwhelming brightness. Compare the coming of the cloud into Solomon's temple, the last verse of last Sunday's lesson.

10. *Fear not.* R. V., *Be not afraid. I bring good-tidings.* For these words there is one word in the Greek (εὐαγγελίζομαι), and from this verb our verb *evangelize* comes. *To all people.* R. V., *to all the people.*

11. *For unto you is born.* R. V., *For there is born to you. The city of David.* Bethlehem was the birthplace of David. *Which.* R. V., *who. Christ.* The word *Christ* (Χριστός) is the Greek word, as *Messiah* is the Hebrew word, for *Anointed, the Anointed One;* it was the official title of Jesus as the One consecrated to be the Redeemer of the world.

12. *This shall be a sign.* R. V., *this is the sign.* "The sign was in the singular conjunction of circumstances — a new-born babe lying in a manger." *Adeney. The babe.* R. V., *a babe.*

14. Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased. R. V.

In some manuscripts the Greek word *εὐδοκία,* translated *good will,* is in the nominative case and the whole phrase (*ἐν ἀνθρόποις εὐδοκία*) is rightly translated as in the Authorized Version, *good will to men.* There is no verb expressed in the Greek, and the verb "be" is understood in the English translation. In other Greek manuscripts there is an *s* at the end of the Greek word making it in the genitive case (*εὐδοκίας*); this the Revisers decided to be the better reading, and accordingly in the English Revised Version the phrase is translated *among men of good will.* To show more clearly that it is God's good-will, not man's — for the phrase is "a Hebraism, meaning men to whom God is favorable" — the American Revisers changed the translation to *among men in whom He is well pleased.* The form of the verse, as Dr. Riddle explains, "is that of Hebrew parallelism, in two lines, with a threefold correspondence; 'glory'—'peace'; 'in the highest'—'on earth'; 'God'—'men of his good pleasure.'"

15. *As the angels were gone away.* R. V., *when the angels went away. Thing.* R. V. margin, *saying. Which is come to pass.* R. V., *that is come to pass.*

16. *And found Mary and Joseph.* R. V., *and found both Mary and Joseph.*

17. *When they had seen it.* R. V., *when they saw it. They made known abroad . . . the child.* R. V., *they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child.* They made it known to many; see the next verse.

18. *All they.* R. V., *all. Those things.* R. V., *the things. Told them.* R. V., *spoken unto them.*

19. *Things.* R. V., *sayings. And pondered.* R. V., *pondering.*

20. *As it was told.* R. V., *Even as it was spoken.*

An Early Representation of the Holy Family. From a Stone in the museum at Florence.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

9. *An angel of the Lord, and the glory of the Lord.* We are sure that the credibility of the miraculousness of the Advent will be more clear to us if we have really felt how vast was the importance and how great was the necessity of the event. If ever miracle might be let loose out of the rigid hand of law,

when should it be but now, when the King of all the laws is coming in His personality? If there are angels, now certainly is the time for them to appear. If the stars can ever have a message and lead men, now is the time when their ministry can plead its strongest warrant. If ever the thin veil between the natural and the supernatural may break asunder, it must be now, when the supernatural power enters into eternal life and God is present among the sons of men. To any one who believes in the possibility of miracle at all, and who knows what the meaning of the Incarnation is, the wonder would be if it had no miraculous accompaniment. The breakage through the ordinary laws of nature's life seems natural and fitting, as when a king passes through a city we expect to hear trumpets and cannon replace the common sounds of trade and domestic life, which are all that its streets commonly echo. *Brooks.*

12. *Lying in a manger.*

Why must he lay His infant head
In the manger where the beasts were fed?
So that the poorest here might cry,
"My Lord was as lowly born as I." *Phœbe Cary*

19. *Mary kept all these sayings.* Because the Roman Catholic has exalted Mary to a place that the Gospels never claim for her, is no reason why Protestants should utterly neglect her memory, or be fearful of ever mentioning her name. The Protestant has seen Mary advanced to even more than equality with her Son; and in his revolt from what seems little less than idolatry has grown shy of mentioning the name of Mary at all. Yet is she blessed forever among women; yet is her character so full of grace and charm that the world has little to compare with it; yet is the story of her love for her Son an idyl of motherhood, so sweet and noble, that it has sown the hearts of generations with the seeds of a thousand tender and reverent thoughts. The Protestant need not worship Mary; but he may at least honor her. He may justly resent what is termed Mariolatry; but the same lips that address the Son as "My Lord and my God," may also cry, "Hail, Mary, blessed art thou among women." *W. J. Dawson, The Reproach of Christ.*

20. *All the things that they had heard and seen.* Such a story must be incredible to all save the pure in heart. Little children do not question it; to them it is natural, historic, simple — as much a part of their lives as the love of parents and the comfort of home. For them the Star of Bethlehem is like every other star, and the wise men travel from afar because they are wise, and the angels sing because they are always singing; and for those who stand about them, and watch their bright faces and the light of the star in their eyes, they are not only the custodians of the Christmas story, but its revealers as well. The highest things are credible to those only whose lives respond to and fulfill them. To believe in Christmas and the truth which comes with it, borne on such splendor of common things, one needs not to study historic evidence, but to become as a little child in purity of heart. For the Christ in the heart recognizes the Christ in the manger. *H. W. Mabie, The Life of the Spirit.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

8. *Shepherds abiding in the field.* Much has been said about the impossibility of shepherds being out in the fields with their flocks in December, because of

the snow and cold, but natives of Palestine tell us that it rarely snows at Bethlehem, and after the heavy rains of November the flowers blossom and the shepherds lead their flocks out to pasture. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent says: "There was near Bethlehem, on the road to Jerusalem, a tower known as *Midgal Eder,* or the watch-tower of the flock. Here was the station where shepherds watched the flocks destined for sacrifice in the temple. Animals straying from Jerusalem on any side as far as from Jerusalem to Midgal Eder were offered in sacrifice. It was a settled conviction among the Jews that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, and equally that He was to be revealed from Midgal Eder."

15. *Let us go unto Bethlehem.* On the anniversary of Christ's birth, in the town where He was born, the Latins, the Greeks, and the Armenians hold their services in the Church of the Nativity, an ancient church built on the spot where it was supposed that Christ was born. The Latin celebration begins at eleven in the evening and lasts nearly all night. Men, women, and children sit upon the marble floor and listen to the music of monks and priests, and watch the passing to and fro of the bishops and archbishops attired in glittering robes embroidered with gold and silver. At midnight there is silence while the bells peal forth the hour, and then as the "Gloria in Excelsis" is exultantly sung, a curtain is drawn aside and from above the chancel a little silver cradle containing a wax image of the Babe is reverently lowered to be carried at the head of the procession to the Chapel of the Manger below the church. All the bishops and archbishops follow, behind them the consuls from Jerusalem in their official costumes, then long rows of chanting priests, two by two, and finally the members of the congregation, all carrying lighted tapers. Near the foot of the flight of steps is a marble slab, and in the center of it a large brass star bearing the inscription: *Hic de Maria Jesus Natus Est*— (Here Jesus was born of Mary). On an altar above a manger the little silver cradle is laid, where it remains during the week of Christmas. Here incense is burned continually, and there are many lamps in the room, each the gift of a king, which are never allowed to go out. Thus in their own way these people of Bethlehem celebrate the joyful event.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem," said the shepherds, after the disappearance of the heavenly host. Their way led them over the fields and up the steep, carefully terraced slopes of a long narrow ridge on whose summit Bethlehem was located, five miles southwest of Jerusalem.

"O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night."

The traditional site of the inn, and the manger where the Babe lay, was on the spot where now stands the Church of the Nativity, the most prominent building in Bethlehem, surrounded by the fortress-like convent buildings.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From their home in Nazareth in Galilee, sixty-six miles north of Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary had made the journey southward to "their own city" of Bethlehem, for this had been the early home of their ancestor David. A decree of Cæsar Augustus had ordered the enrollment of every one in the Roman Empire, and the people of Palestine were enrolled in their "own cities." There was no room for them in the inn, and when Jesus, Mary's Son, was born, she laid Him in a manger. The time of his birth is uncertain, but Dec. 25, B. C. 5, is commonly assumed to be the day.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A Sunday-school in New York has a pretty custom of giving each Sunday a carnation to every boy and girl in the primary department who has had a birthday during the preceding week. When they first began doing this two years ago, the children asked if all those whose birthdays had already passed could not celebrate again and have their flowers. We all like to have our birthdays remembered. There is a small village in Germany where all the people know one another, and there they celebrate, not only the birthdays of each one, but the important happenings in their lives. The day that one was saved from drowning, the day that another had a visit from a far-away son, the day that some one received good news, all these days are remembered, and when they come around the next year the people bring little gifts to the fortunate one to show that they are remembered.

Whose birthdays do we as a people celebrate? We like to remember the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln, because these great men did so much for our country, but of course the people in England and France and Germany do not celebrate these birthdays. Whose birthday alone is remembered in every part of the world because His birth brought the most wonderful good news to every person everywhere?

For Older Pupils. Our first lesson and our last in the series of lessons this year are one and the same — the Word became flesh and dwelt among men.

"Wonderful Word, impearled
In childhood holy-white;
Word that is Godhood, Love,
Light of the World." *Katherine Lee Bates.*

In the first lesson we had the philosophy of the Incarnation; to-day we have the history. Then we had the explanation of the Nativity, as it seemed to the thoughtful Apostle writing long after the event and divinely inspired; now we study the story of Christ's birth as it seemed to the shepherds and Mary on that first Christmas day in Bethlehem.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATION

I The Meaning of Christmas

Christ's Birth the Dawn of a New Era. There are many things in life whose meaning we do not know and whose value we do not appreciate until they are taken from us. If we could imagine what this world would be were

Christmas taken away, if we could imagine the fact of Christ's birth annulled, and all the changes in life that His life has brought about obliterated, then, perhaps, we could gain an adequate knowledge of the meaning of Christmas.

"The birth of Jesus is the sunrise of the Bible," says Dr. Henry van Dyke. "Towards this point the aspirations of the prophets and the poems of the psalmists were directed, as the heads of flowers are turned towards the dawn. From this point a new day began to flow very silently over the world — a day of faith and freedom, a day of hope and love. When we remember the high meaning that has come into human life, and the clear light that has flooded softly down from the manger-cradle in Bethlehem of Judea, we do not wonder that mankind has learned to reckon history from the birthday of Jesus, and to date all events by the years before or after the Nativity of Christ."

The Needs that Christ satisfied. Once a year is none too often to meditate upon the meaning of Christ's coming into the world. As His followers have loved to commemorate His resurrection on each Easter Day, so it has seemed fitting since the early centuries to commemorate His birth on Christmas Day. The world needed Christ. It needed the conception of God as a loving Father of men which Jesus brought. It needed the teaching concerning righteousness that Jesus gave. It needed His hopeful outlook for the future. It needed the meaning which He found in life. It needed the impelling and persuasive example which Jesus set. It needed the forgiveness of sin and the communion with God which Jesus accomplished. The presence of these facts and forces which came with the advent of Christ made a new era in the progress of humanity, and lifted the world to a sublimer plane. We can not too often consider what a blessing the Gospel was to the generation which first welcomed it, and the blessing which the Gospel has been to every succeeding generation including our own. To study the history of the Christian centuries for the purpose of observing what Christianity has accomplished for civilization, is one of the grandest studies which we can make, and one of the most convincing arguments for the historical trustworthiness of the New Testament which records the beginnings of Christianity. We shall not fulfill the opportunity of the Christmas season unless we give ourselves with special devotion to the contemplation of Christ in all His divine glory, character, and work. In such a contemplation is the highest uplift of soul and life. *Editorial, Biblical World.*

Some Lessons of Christmas.

The King has come to His palace gate and men look upon His face; that is what the Incarnation means — God's answer to man's imperious cry, "Let us see the King." *John F. Carson.*

The first simple, broad, pervading sentiment of Christmas Day ought to be of how sacred and high this human life is into which the Lord was born. *Phillips Brooks.*

To know that God so loved us as to give us His Son for our dearest Brother, has brought human affection to its highest tide on this day of that Brother's birth; if God so loved us, how can we help loving one another? *Babcock.*

Good morning, Lord! For little boys.
The day more generous is of joys
Than unto men, they say:
If so, for greater happiness
Teach us Thy holy name to bless
With fuller hearts than they. *John B. Tabb.*

Christmas is, indeed, the season for regenerated feeling — the season for kindling, not merely the fire of hospitality in the hall, but the genial flame of charity in the heart. *Washington Irving.*

II The Spirit of Christmas

Forget not the Great Gift. The oldest Christmas sermon that we possess was preached by Chrysostom at Antioch on the 25th day of December, 386 A. D. This was almost at the beginning of the Christmas celebration; earlier the 6th of January had been regarded as the day of Christ's birth. "It is not yet ten years since this day was wholly unknown to us," said Chrysostom, "but you celebrate it with as much zeal as if it had been known since time immemorial!" What would that famous preacher have said about the celebration of Christmas in our day? I think he would have used his forcible eloquence to denounce the spirit that sometimes prevails, the spirit that is so engrossed with the giving and receiving of gifts that it wholly forgets God's great Gift, and never stops to recall the meaning of the day, the fact that unto us was born this day a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.

True Giving. God's Christmas Gift to the world was Himself. The only true gift, Emerson tells us, is a portion of ourselves. Do we think of this in our Christmas giving? The true spirit of Christmas is realized in our giving only when our remembrances, however simple, represent at least some loving thought on our part toward the one who is to receive the gift. The woman who bought a water-color that was hideous merely because she felt obliged to buy something of an artist's work, and then sent it to a friend whom she knew was too poor to frame it and too much of an artist herself too enjoy it, was kind-hearted and was trying to do her duty to two people, but the true Christmas spirit was not in her giving.

"'Tis not the weight of jewel or plate,
Or the fondle of silk and fur;
'Tis the spirit in which the gift is rich
As the gifts of the wise men were."

The secret of the "Christmas spirit" is in forgetting self and finding happiness in others' joy. It is the spirit of the heavenly host; their own personalities are in the background, as they sing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased." There are lonely ones on Christmas Day, sad and burdened ones, but even they may have a portion of the Christmas spirit if they will but forget themselves and do something to make some one else happy. These words of Whittier's should never be forgotten: —

For somehow, not only for Christmas, but all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others, is the joy that comes back to you;
And the more you spend in blessing the poor and the lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing, returns to make you glad.

The Right Spirit. Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people and remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts,

hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness — are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and the desires of little children; to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking whether your friends love you and ask yourself whether you love them enough to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open — are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world — stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death — and that the blessed Life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you can keep it for a day, why not always–
But you can never keep it alone.

Henry van Dyke, The Spirit of Christmas.

III Unto you is born this Day a Saviour

Saved. Last Sunday we studied about the great temple which Solomon built at Jerusalem, and the last words of the lesson were that "The cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." The God whom the Israelites thought of as dwelling between the cherubim of the temple, came to earth in His Son, and next Friday we celebrate His birthday.

Several years ago an ocean steamer was dashed against the rocks off the coast of Newfoundland, and almost all the passengers lost their lives. A telegram was sent to a home in Detroit announcing the drowning of the young man of the household, but a few hours afterwards there came a second despatch that said, "Saved" and was signed by the man himself. That despatch brought such gladness to his wife and his mother that they framed it and hung it on the wall of his office. The message sent on the first Christmas Day announced the birth of the Saviour, and it was sent as "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." The Saviour came to earth and lived and suffered and died that all men through Him might be saved. Such a glad message should be cherished and framed in the heart of every one who believes the glad news.

Good Tidings of Great Joy. A poor little street girl was taken sick one Christmas and carried to the hospital. While there she heard the story of Jesus coming into the world to save us. One day Little Broomstick (that was her street name) whispered to the nurse: "I'm havin' real good times here — ever such good times! S'pose I'll have to go 'way from here just as soon as I get well; but I'll take the good time along — some of it, anyhow. Did you know about Jesus bein' born?"

"Yes," replied the nurse; "I know. Sh-sh-sh! Don't talk any more."

"You did? I thought you looked as if you didn't, and I was going to tell you."

"Why, how did I look?" asked the nurse, forgetting her own order in her curiosity.

"Oh, just like most o' folks — kind o' glum. I shouldn't think you'd ever look glum, if you knew about Jesus bein' born." *Faith and Works.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

So simple was the Christmas sermon that the peasant congregation understood it, every word; yet so profound that we to-day, after all these centuries of prayer and study, have not learned the last of its great meaning. *George Hodges.*

Most human and yet most divine,
The Flower of man and God. *Whittier.*

Beautiful is the year in its coming and going — most beautiful and blessed because it is the year of our Lord. *Lucy Larcom.*

Go, breathe it in the ear
Of all who doubt and fear,
And say to them, "Be of good cheer!" *Longfellow.*

Years are now reckoned, not from the beginning of the world, nor from the beginning of our country, but from the birth of Jesus Christ: those who have traveled in the mountainous countries know how the highest crest of the mountain range is always shown by seeing from that point, and that point only, the streams dividing on either side; even so it is with the event of this day. *Dean Stanley.*

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER

Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John 4. 9.

The word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. John 1. 14.

His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isa. 9. 6.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Matt. 1. 21.

The free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 6. 23.

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. 2 Cor. 9. 15.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

The observance of Christmas has no lasting value to us if we do not carry its spirit with us throughout the days of the coming year. "It is only for thirty-six hours of the three hundred and sixty-five days that all people remember they are brothers and sisters, and those are the hours that we call Christmas Eve and Christmas Day;" says Dr. Hale. "When they always remember it, it will be Christmas all the time." Feelings, however beautiful, that do not lead to actions, are not what is required of us by Him whose birth we celebrate. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them, are His words.

Our daily lives should prove that we have learned the things which Christmas Day means.

The shepherds were obedient to the heavenly vision; they started at once to see the "sign" given them, and they found the Babe lying in the manger. We may make the same discovery of the Christ if we are obedient to the messages we have.

He does not simply say, Christ is born, but *to you* He is born; neither does He say, I bring glad tidings, but *to you* I bring glad tidings of great joy. Furthermore, this joy was not to remain in them, but it was to be *to all people. Martin Luther.*

One dark night a young German soldier, posted at a sentry-box before the barracks, heard the hoof-beats of his captain's horse. He went quickly out and offered his salute and then stood there like a marble statue till the captain called out, "What use to me are your tokens of respect on this dark night; open the gate, so that I can ride in." Is there not a lesson here for us at this Christmas season? Of what use to our Master are all the honors we pay Him at this season if we do not give Him entrance into our hearts? An ancient poet has expressed this thought in these words:

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn."

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Girt round with wonders was the birth of our Saviour, and the greatest of all the wonders were manifested to humble shepherds as they were keeping watch over their flocks at night in the neighborhood of Bethlehem. An angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of the Lord shown round them, filling them with awe and dread till the angel bade them fear not, for his message was one of good tidings to all people: a Saviour, Christ the Lord, had been born that day in Bethlehem; a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger would prove to them that his message was true. Then the shepherds heard a multitude of heavenly host triumphantly chanting praises to God and proclaiming peace to men. No words had the shepherds in reply; they were dumb with amazement till the vision disappeared, and then they said to one another, Let us go at once and see that which the Lord has made known to us. In haste they went, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger as the angel had said. They told the good tidings that they had heard, and all wondered, while Mary, the mother of Jesus, treasured them up in her heart. Like the shepherds who returned praising God, we, too, would add our thanks to God for His unspeakable Gift.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The condition of the world at the time of Christ's birth.
2. The character of the people to whom divine revelations came and still come.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Come prepared to ask as well as answer review questions. (Assign work for whatever plan has been selected for the Review Lesson.)

LESSON XIII — DECEMBER 27

REVIEW

Read Proverbs 4

Golden Text for the Quarter

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Prov. 4. 23.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE UNITED KINGDOM FROM THE BRINGING OF THE ARK TO JERUSALEM BY DAVID TO THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE BY SOLOMON.

A suggestion. Let nineteen pupils come before the school, each one prepared to recite one of the sections below.

Lesson I. David assembled the chosen men of Israel and went with them to Kiriath-jearim to bring thence the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. The procession started joyously from the house of Abinadab, where the ark had long been kept. The ark was borne on a new cart, and Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, drove the oxen. David and "all the house of Israel" rejoiced and sang to the accompaniment of musical instruments as they went on their way, but when the oxen stumbled, as they reached the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah took hold of the ark and was suddenly stricken with death. David regarded Uzzah's death as a token of God's displeasure, and he was afraid to bring the ark into his citadel. It was taken to the house of Obed-edom and left there. After three months it was seen that he and his house prospered, and David then brought the ark to Jerusalem with great joy, offering many sacrifices on the way.

David appointed certain Levites to care for the ark, and on that day ordained thanks unto the Lord.

"Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto His name:
Bring an offering and come before Him:
Worship Jehovah in holy array."

Lesson II. David told Nathan the prophet that it was not fitting for him to dwell in a house of cedar while the ark of the Lord was kept in a tent. Nathan approved of the King's purpose to build a temple, but that night he learned that this was not God's will. The word of God came to him that God had in no way indicated a wish for a temple rather than the tabernacle. The message for David was a reminder of God's presence with him from the sheepfold to the throne, and contained promises of a great name, peace for his people Israel, a successor who should build the temple, and the establishment of his kingdom for ever.

The message which Nathan received from God in a vision he gave to David. David uttered a prayer of trust in God, and of deep gratitude for His promises.

Lesson III. David's next care was to learn whether there remained any

one of Saul's household to whom he could show kindness for Jonathan's sake. Through Ziba he learned that Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan, who was lame, lived across the Jordan in Lo-debar. David sent for him, and announced his intention of restoring to him Saul's estates and of showing him further kindness on account of his father. Mephibosheth could scarcely believe the good news. Then David called Ziba and directed him and his fifteen sons and twenty servants to till the land for Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth himself the king received into his own household and at his own royal table.

David caused Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, to be slain in battle, and married Bathsheba. By a touching parable Nathan brought home to David's conscience his great sin, and most sincere was the King's repentance. His joy over God's forgiveness is expressed in the Psalm which is the subject of our next lesson.

Lesson IV. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven," exclaims the Psalmist, and then gives expression to his inward torture while refusing to acknowledge his sin. Day and night God's hand was heavy upon him. But as soon as he confessed, God forgave. His own experience leads him to exhort others to pray to God in trouble, for to all God will give deliverance. God has assured him that He will teach and guide him in the way he should go. All who would have God's guidance must yield Him willing obedience, must not rebel like senseless brutes which can be controlled only by bit and bridle. Blessedness will come to him who trusts in God. Be glad in Jehovah, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

A series of family troubles now befell David. Absalom, one of his sons, revenged a wrong done to his sister by Ammon, another son of David, by having him killed at a feast. To avoid the consequences of his deed Absalom fled to his kinsmen in Geshur. At the end of three years Joab, David's general, by a strategy prevailed upon the king to allow Absalom to return. "Let him return to his own house," said David, "but let him not see my face." After two years Absalom forced Joab to entreat with the King for him, and David restored his son to royal favor.

Lesson V. Absalom now began an attempt to win the hearts of the people away from his father. He was a handsome man, and in a royal chariot and horses, with forty men to run before him, he showed them what a king he would make. He arose early day after day and cordially greeted the people assembled at the gate to await the king's judgment. He expressed an interest in each one's affairs, assured them that if he were king their suits would be speedily and satisfactorily settled. He would permit no one to do him homage, but kissed them all as brothers. When Absalom thought the time was ripe for a rebellion he gained the king's permission to go to Hebron, there, as he claimed, to pay a vow he had made to the Lord. With him went two hundred chief men to a feast, not knowing what Absalom purposed. Ahitophel, David's counsellor, was with him. Spies were sent throughout the land to announce to the people that when the trumpet sounded Absalom would have been made king at Hebron.

When David learned of Absalom's rebellion he hastily left Jerusalem and went to Mahanaim. Absalom took possession of the city. Ahitophel advised him to pursue David's army at once, but Hushai, acting in David's interests, counselled him to wait till he could gather a great army. Absalom followed Hushai's advice, thus giving David time to collect and

marshal his forces. The battle took place at Mount Ephraim. David had charged his generals to spare Absalom, but when Joab learned that Absalom had ridden under a low oak and his head was caught there he hastened to the spot and slew him. They cast his body into a pit and heaped stones upon it. Joab sent a certain Cushite to David with tidings of the battle, and allowed Ahimaaz, the priest Zadok's son, at his urgent entreaty, to follow the first messenger. Ahimaaz outran the Cushite and reached Mahanaim first.

Lesson VI. David sat between the gates of the city awaiting news of the battle. The watchman over the gate saw the two runners coming, and while they were afar off he told the king that the running of the first one seemed like that of Ahimaaz. "He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings," said David. Ahimaaz arrived and announced the success of David's army. David paid no heed to his words, but anxiously inquired about Absalom's safety. There was a tumult as he started, he knew not what it meant, Ahimaaz answered, not wishing to be the bearer of ill tidings. Then the Cushite arrived, and also told the king that his enemies were overcome. "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" the father asked. When the truth was told him, David wept bitterly, and went up to the chamber over the gate to mourn for his son, the son for whom he would have died.

Joab reproved David for forgetting his people in his grief, and the king arose and greeted the victorious warriors. Preparations for the return to Jerusalem were at once made. The tribe of Judah came to escort the king over the Jordan, and half the people of Israel also. Between the rival tribes strife arose, which culminated in a revolt of the tribes of Israel under Sheba. David went on to Jerusalem, and Joab pursued Sheba, and besieged him in Abel. The people cut off Sheba's head, and delivered it to Joab in order to end the siege.

National calamities, also, befell David in the later years of his reign. There was a famine in the land for three years, explained as a punishment sent by God because of Saul's treatment of the Gibeonites, and David delivered up to them seven sons of Saul to be hanged at Gibeah. A three days' pestilence followed the numbering of the people. David purchased Araunah's threshing-floor at Jerusalem, and erected there an altar. Many years and vast sums of money he spent in preparations for the temple which his son should build.

Lesson VII. The 23d Psalm expresses David's calm confidence in the Lord. Like a good shepherd the Lord cares for me, says the Psalmist, so that I want for nothing. To green pastures, beside still waters, He leads me, restoring my soul, guiding me into right paths for the glory of His name. Even in ravines dark and gloomy as death, I fear no ill, for He is with me, guiding and defending me with rod and staff. The Lord is my Host as well as my Shepherd, preparing a feast for me even before my enemies, anointing me as His guest, and granting me an abundance of good things. Surely goodness and lovingkindness, His trusted messengers, shall follow me always, and I shall dwell for ever in the house of the Lord.

David was now old and feeble, and his oldest son Adonijah thought the time favorable for him to seize the throne. Joab, the general, and Abiathar, the priest, aided him in his attempt. He gave a great feast to which he invited all the kings sons save Solomon, and had himself proclaimed

king. Nathan reported to Bathsheba what was being done, and she told the king, reminding him of his promise that their son Solomon should be his successor. Nathan followed and confirmed her words. The aged king declared that Solomon should reign after him.

Lesson VIII. David took prompt measures to settle the question of his successor. Calling Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the general to him, he bade them mount Solomon upon the royal mule and escort him to Gihon, and after anointing him king there, to proclaim the news. The plan was carried into execution at once, and when the trumpet was sounded all the people gathered and rejoiced over their new king. Adonijah and his guests heard the news while at their feast; the guests fled, and Adonijah took refuge in the sanctuary. He caught hold of the horns of the brazen altar, and would not leave till he heard the king's word that his life should be spared. Solomon said he would not slay him as long as he proved himself worthy, and Adonijah came and paid homage to his brother Solomon as the King.

David charged Solomon to walk in the ways of the Lord and keep His commandments. Soon afterwards he died and Solomon reigned in his stead. Thinking that Adonijah was taking steps to obtain his throne, Solomon had him put to death. He took the priesthood away from Abiathar and punished Joab with death for their conspiracy with Adonijah. Shimei also was slain. Solomon's marriage to the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egpyt is next recorded.

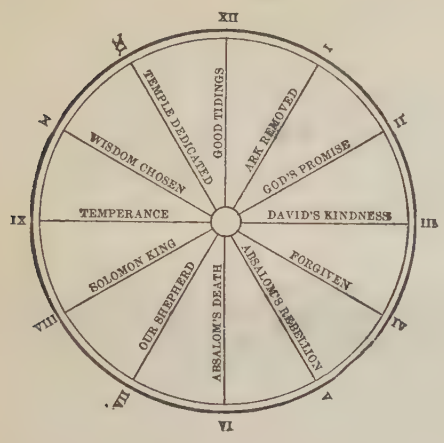
Lesson X. With the chief men of the nation, a vast congregation, Solomon went to Gibeon, where were the ancient tabernacle and the brazen altar, and there offered a thousand burnt offerings. That night in a dream God appeared to him and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." With grateful words for God's kindness to his father David and himself, and with humble acknowledgment of his own inexperience, Solomon asked for an understanding heart to judge his great nation. Because he had not asked riches for himself, nor long life, nor conquest of his enemies, Solomon's choice pleased the Lord, and He promised to give him riches and honor as well as wisdom, and long life as well, if he kept His commandments as David his Father had done. Solomon awoke greatly impressed by his prophetic dream, and returned to Jerusalem where he offered great sacrifices.

Solomon's wisdom was shown in his decision in regard to the two mothers who claimed the same child. Solomon ordered the child to be slain and half given to each woman; the mother who begged to have the child given to the other rather than slain was the true mother.

The building of the temple and the making of its sacred vessels and other furnishings was the great event in Solomon's reign. He erected also a magnificent royal palace and adorned his capital with other fine buildings.

Lesson XI. At the feast of tabernacles, in the seventh month of the twelfth year of his reign, Solomon dedicated the great temple. The ark of the covenant was brought from Mount Zion, and the tabernacle and brazen altar from Gibeon. Sacrifices without number were offered. The priests placed the sacred ark under the outstretched wings of the cherubim in the most holy place of the temple. In the ark were the two tables of stone which Moses had put there at Horeb when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel. When the priests left the temple it was filled with the glory of the Lord.

REVIEW OUTLINE OF THE QUARTER'S LESSONS



I The Reign of David.
1. The Ark brought to Jerusalem. I.
2. God's Promise to David. II.
3. David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son. III.
4. The Joy of Forgiveness. IV.
5. Absalom's Rebellion. V.
6. David's Grief for Absalom. VI.
7. Shepherd Psalm. VII.

II The Reign of Solomon.
1. Anointed King. VIII.
2. Wisdom Chosen. X.
3. Temple Dedicated. XI.

(Lesson IX is the Temperance Lesson and Lesson XII the Christmas Lesson.)

REVIEW LESSON OUTLINES

1. David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem.
   - Joyful Journey. 1–5.
   - Interrupted Plans. 6–11.
   - Successful Attempt. 12.

2. God's Promise to David.
   - David's Purpose. 1, 2.
   - God's Refusal. 3–6.
   - Great Promises. 7–14.

3. David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son.
   - David's Quest. 1–5.
   - Mephibosheth's Arrival. 6–8.
   - David's Kindness. 9–13.

4. The Joy of Forgiveness.
   - The Beatitude. 1, 2.
   - Punishment and Penitence. 3–5.
   - Good Counsel. 6–11.

5. Absalom Rebels against David.
   - Pomp and Flattery. 1–6.
   - Treachery and Falsehood. 7–9.
   - Conspiracy Furthered. 10–12.

6. David Grieves for Absalom.
   - Messengers Arrive. 24–27.
   - Their Reports. 28–32.
   - The Father's Grief. 33.

7. The Lord our Shepherd.
   - The Shepherd's Care. 1–4.
   - The Host's Bounty. 5.
   - The Happy Future. 6.

8.	Solomon Anointed King.	David's Plan. 32–35. Its Accomplishment. 36–40. Adonijah Spared. 50–53.
9.	World's Temperance Sunday.	Ephraim's Sin. 1–6. Judah's Sin. 7, 8. Outcry and Answer. 9–13.
10.	Solomon Chooses Wisdom.	God's Offer. 4, 5. Solomon's Prayer. 6–9. God's Answer. 10–15.
11.	Solomon Dedicates the Temple.	Entrance of the Ark. 1–6. Position of the Ark. 7–9. Descent of the Cloud. 10, 11.
12.	World's Christmas Lesson.	The Vision. 8–14. The Effect. 15. The Visit. 16–20.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. For what purpose did David go to Kiriath-jearim? How was the ark carried? Who drove the oxen? What did Uzzah do? What then happened? Why was David afraid to bring the ark to Jerusalem? With whom was it left? What message was brought to David about Obed-edom? What did David then do? How did he and the people show their joy? What is the Golden Text?

2. Who was Nathan? What did David tell him he wished to do? What was Nathan's answer? What was God's message to Nathan that night? What promises were made in regard to David? What is our Golden Text? How did David receive Nathan's words?

3. Who was Jonathan? Why did David wish to show a kindness for Jonathan's sake? Who was Mephibosheth? How had he been made lame? How did David learn where he was? What did he promise to give to Mephibosheth? What great honor did he show him? What is the Golden Text?

4. What is the 32d Psalm about? What is the Golden Text? What does the Psalm say about prayer? About trust? About obedience? About joy?

5. Who was Absalom? What pomp did he display? How did he seek to win the hearts of the people? What reason did he give to David for his going to Hebron? What was his real reason? What did he do? What commandment did he break? What was the result of his rebellion?

6. Where was David waiting for news of the battle with Absalom's followers? Who was seen approaching? What did the first messenger tell David? What was David's question? Why did not Ahimaaz answer him rightly? What question did David ask of the second messenger? What did he then learn? What is the Golden Text?

7. Repeat the 23d Psalm. What is God called? Where does the Shepherd lead His sheep? Why should one fear no evil?

8. What son did David wish to have his throne? What other son claimed it? How did he try to secure it? Who told David what he was doing? What

MEMORIAL LIBRARY

directions did David give for making Solomon king? How did the people receive the news? How did Adonijah receive it? Where did he take refuge? What word did he send to Solomon? What was the King's answer? What is the Golden Text?

10. How many offerings did King Solomon make at Gibeon? Who appeared to him in a dream? What did God offer him? What did Solomon ask for? What was God's answer? What is the Golden Text?

11. What great wish of David did Solomon fulfil? What did he have brought to the temple? What was in the ark? Who had put them there? What filled the temple as the priests came out? What is the Golden Text?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. What was the most joyful event in David's reign? Where had the ark of the covenant been kept for a long time? Why was Uzzah's death regarded as a divine judgment? Why was such a lesson needed at this time? Under what circumstances was the ark finally brought to Jerusalem?

2. What reason did David give for wishing to build a temple? Why did Nathan at first approve and then disapprove of his project? What reasons were given for the rejection of David's wish? What promises were made to him? In whom was the greatest promise fulfilled?

3. What did David learn from Ziba in regard to Jonathan's family? What did Mephibosheth fear when summoned to the king? How did David show his regard for Jonathan?

4. What is the heading of the 32d Psalm? What is its beatitude? In what words are the sufferings because of an unconfessed sin expressed? In what words the confession and forgiveness? What is the Psalmist's counsel? What are his words in regard to rejoicing?

5. What did Absalom do that Samuel had warned the people a King would do? In what ways did he flatter the people? Why did he go to Hebron? Who joined his conspiracy? What did David do? What two counsellors advised Absalom and why did he follow the wrong advice? How did his rebellion end?

6. Why was Joab loth to let Ahimaaz bear to the King the tidings of the battle? What was David's only anxious thought? How did Ahimaaz answer his question? How did the Cushite answer the same question? What were David's words of grief? Why did Joab reprove him?

7. Repeat the 23d Psalm. Under what two figures is God spoken of? As a Shepherd what does He do? As a Host?

8. What second son rebelled against his father? Who took up his cause? How were they afterwards punished? How was news of Adonijah's plans brought to David? What orders did David give? What became of Adonijah?

10. Why did Solomon go to Gibeon to sacrifice? Narrate his dream. How did he regard the dream? What instance of his wisdom is recorded in the Bible?

11. What was the greatest event in Solomon's life? In connection with what feast was the dedication of the temple held? Where was the ark? Where were the tabernacle and brazen altar? Where was the ark placed? What was in it? What expressed to the people God's acceptance of the temple? What did Solomon do on the occasion? What other events marked Solomon's reign?

Samuel Colgate Baptist MEMORIAL LIBRARY Presented by

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

Lesson I. In this scene there is a great procession. At its head there is a large chest upon a cart drawn by oxen. The people are dancing and singing and playing musical instruments, and every one seems very happy. Suddenly there is a great commotion. The procession has halted, beside the cart a man lies dead, and every one looks greatly frightened. Now they are carrying the chest carefully into a near-by house, and every one is going sorrowfully away. Again there is a procession winding up a steep hill. At its head some men are bearing the great chest aloft, trumpets are sounding, and every one is rejoicing.

Lesson II. Two men are talking earnestly together. Now it is night, and although one of the men is alone, there is a wonderful light on his face and he seems to be listening to some one. Morning is come and the same two men are talking together again.

Lesson III. A man is sitting in a palace, and before him stands another man to whom he is talking. We see the same place and people again, and this time a third man has prostrated himself before one of the men, who motions to him to rise, and now we can see that this third man is very lame.

Lesson IV. There is a king in this lesson who has been in great sorrow and trouble, but now is very happy. Why was he sorrowful? What has made him happy?

Lesson V. Here every one is hurrying to get out of the way as a grand chariot drawn by many horses dashes by. Fifty men are running along by the chariot and keeping up with the horses in speed. The man who was in the chariot is next seen near a gate in a high wall. He is surrounded by men and as other men come he kisses each one.

Lesson VI. An old man is sitting by a city gate. On the wall above there is a watchman, and off in the distance two men come running. One man arrives and says something, and then steps aside as the second man comes and talks. The words he is speaking must be very sad, for the old man begins to weep bitterly.

Lesson VII. This same old man who has seen much sorrow looks calm and contented. He fears nothing that can happen to him, because he is trusting in one whom he calls his Shepherd. Who is his Shepherd? What does He do for him?

Lesson VIII. In one place a crowd of men are feasting and rejoicing, and in another place a feeble old man is lying on a couch and giving directions to three men. In the next scene there is a procession of happy people who are shouting and rejoicing, as they talk about a noble looking young man who rides on a mule at the head of the procession. Yet another scene shows us a man holding on to an altar. Now we see him bowing before the young man whom we saw in the last scene.

Lesson IX. A man is preaching to a crowd of men who do not seem to like what he is saying to them. They say that he is talking to them as if they were little children, and saying the same things over and over. The man then tells them of a great calamity that will come upon them. What evil has he been talking to them about?

Lesson X. In the first scene sacrifices are being offered on a hill before a great king and a multitude of people. In the second scene the king is asleep.

In the third scene other sacrifices are being joyously offered in another place.

Lesson XI. Two processions are coming up a hill, the leaders of one are bearing the large chest we have seen before, and the leaders of the other are carrying the parts of a tent and brazen articles. Sacrifices are being offered in a court before a beautiful building. The chest is now being carried into the building. The great king is here, and such a multitude of happy people are with him.

Lesson XII. It is night, and out in the field there are shepherds sitting around a fire, while near by are many sheep asleep. Suddenly a wonderful light appears, and a strange visitor stands beside the men, and now a multitude of other strange visitors are with them. Now we are shown a cave, and lying on the straw in the manger there is a Babe at whom the shepherds are gazing with a look of awe upon their faces.

SUBJECTS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW.

1. The life of David. This outline may be followed:
   - I. A Shepherd.
   - II. At Court.
   - III. In exile.
   - IV. King of Judah.
   - V. King of all Israel.
     1. Wars.
     2. Family troubles.
     3. National calamities.
     4. Preparations for the Temple.
     5. Closing years.
2. The Life of Solomon. This outline may be followed:
   - I. Accession to the throne.
   - II. His kingdom.
   - III. The temple.
   - IV. Other buildings.
   - V. Commerce.
   - VI. Splendor.
   - VII. Wisdom.
   - VIII. Fall and death.
3. A comparison of the characters of Saul, David, and Solomon.
4. What each of the first three kings accomplished for his kingdom.
5. The books of Samuel.
6. The books of Kings.
7. The books of Chronicles.
8. Unfilial Sons of the Bible.
9. A description of Solomon's temple.
10. Solomon's relations to other countries.
11. An important truth learned from each lesson of the quarter.
12. The first lesson and the last lesson of the year.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON.

1. Review the first two quarters' lessons of this year. 2. Read the entire Book of the Acts. 3. Compare the preface of Luke and of The Acts. Who wrote The Acts? 4. Read the account of the ascension given in Luke. 24. 46–53. 5. Commit to memory the eighth verse of the lesson. 6. Where in the second chapter is the promise of the eighth verse made to us? 38, 39.

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

The Geography of Palestine In the Time of Christ

By MARTHA TARBELL, Ph. D.

Author of Tarbell's Teachers' Guide to the International Sunday School Lessons
Joint Author of The Tarbell Geographical Series for Schools

SINGLE COPY, 25 CENTS; FIVE COPIES, ONE DOLLAR; SPECIAL REDUCTION TO SCHOOLS

THE growing interest in Biblical Geography as a subject of study in Sunday Schools has led to the preparation of this manual for the use of pupils.

What pupil can clearly understand the events of Christ's public ministry who can not locate approximately the cities on the Sea of Galilee, who does not understand the effect on the people of the geographical conditions which made it possible for Christ to labor more successfully with the people of Galilee than He could have done with the people of Judea, who does not, in short, thoroughly know the land where Christ wrought His mighty works? Teachers realize that a knowledge of the geography of Palestine is essential to a clear understanding of the Gospel narrative, but in the short lesson period each week they have not time to impart this knowledge orally, nor can they do this successfully unless the pupils themselves are provided with maps and diagrams.

In this manual the subject is brought within the grasp of all pupils beyond the Primary grade. It is adapted for supplemental work in all schools.

For the convenience of teachers in assigning work the paragraphs are numbered. The paragraphs to be studied each week in connection with the lessons for the first six months of 1908 are given in the "Suggestions to Teachers" in this *Guide*.

THE manual is orderly in plan, clear in statement, and interesting in presentation. Throughout the work the effect of the geographical features of The Land on the history in The Book is is emphasized,

The introductory section treats of the position and extent of Palestine, its distance from the United States, its boundaries and its size. In the next section the physical regions are fully treated—the Maritime Plain, Central Range, Plain of Esdraelon, Jordan Valley, Jordan River System, Eastern Range. (The large colored relief map gives a better representation of the altitude and depth of Palestine's surface than any other colored map ever issued.) In succeeding sections are treated the climate of Palestine—its temperature, seasons and prevailing winds—the political divisions and characteristics of each, the great highways over the country and the cities by geographical groups. With each locality the events in Christ's life are associated.

An important feature of the manual is the map work given with each topic. For this purpose outline maps are furnished.

Pupils will find this work easy and interesting, and this practical work can not fail to make their geographical knowledge gained a permanent possession.

With two full-page colored maps, six pages of outline maps, sixteen helpful diagrams and eight full-page reproductions of photographs

The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Publishers, Indianapolis

HELPS TO THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER

The Tissot Bible Pictures

We have prepared a series of 240 subjects of these celebrated pictures for use in the Sunday-School. They comprise the Old and New Testaments and are the best and most attractive supplementary aid to the study of the lesson that have ever been suggested. They are printed in full color on art paper, and the color work is as fine as in the most expensive works, and the results are wonderfully attractive pictures at the same price as the ordinary picture in black and white.

HOW TO USE THEM

In the Class: Greater attention and larger attendance can then be secured.

As Rewards: For home study or supplementary work.

In Albums: To make a pictorial story of the lessons, the scholar writing the lesson on page opposite picture.

Sample Picture Mailed on Receipt of Two-Cent Stamp

SEND FOR SAMPLE PICTURE

These pictures have received the unqualified endorsement of the leading clergymen and Sunday-School teachers throughout the United States.
The best black and white print fails to give an echo of the rich harmony of color which is the chief glory of a painting, but in our new series of pictures we reproduce the originals faithfully, both in form and color, in all their richness, strength and delicacy. Not only do they teach lessons in biography and history, but they also serve to show the beauty in religious art.

Whatever helps to make the land and the people of Palestine a real land and a real people, helps to withdraw the characters of the Bible from cloudland and the realm of myth. To make the men and women of the Bible actual, living characters to their pupils is one of the first duties of Sunday-School teachers, and no better help can they find for this than in the Tissot pictures. Incited to his work, as the artist was by his love for the messages of the Bible, endowed not only with marvelous artistic skill, but with equally marvelous painstaking fidelity to truthfulness of detail, he has produced a series of masterpieces which graphically interpret Bible scenes and times.

MARTHA TARBELL.

We are all children in our love for pictures, which have far more teaching power than treatises.
In his wonderful pictures, painted from personal observation and with marvelous accuracy in detail, Tissot makes the Eastern people stand out before us in real life and true personality. I have gathered new light for myself and for my people from his pictures.

REV. HENRY BARKER,
Rector of All Saints' Church, Rosendale, N. Y.

AMERICAN TISSOT SOCIETY

27 EAST TWENTY-SECOND STREET NEW YORK

Meigs' Sunday-School Class Books and Records

MADE TO CONFORM TO THE STATISTICAL REPORTS GATHERED BY THE INTERNATIONAL AND VARIOUS STATE SUNDAY-SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

Meigs' International Sunday-School Teachers' Class Book

Twentieth Century Edition

So arranged that the teacher can, in a moment or two, mark the presence of each regular scholar, new scholar and visitor in the class. A collection envelope is pasted in the back of the book. It is made in two sizes, as follows:

No. 1—4½x6¼ in., for small classes of 14 scholars or less, **5c each.**
No. 2—4½x8¼ in., for large classes of 20 scholars or less, **10c each.**

Meigs' International Sunday-School Superintendents' Pocket Record

In which the Superintendent can keep his own record of attendance of all his officers and teachers; a roll of scholars, by classes, and minutes of each day's session; also a memorandum of new scholars, by whom brought, and to what class assigned.

Open end, pocket size, Am. Russia, flexible—lasts one year. **Price, 75 cents.**

Meigs' International Sunday-School Secretary's Record

(Revised edition.) A full, complete, yet simple and easily kept Record for Sunday-School Secretaries.

No. 0—Large enough for school of 24 classes and 440 scholars, bound in heavy paper, side and cloth back, **Price, 60 cents.**
No. 1—Same, bound in substantial cloth covers, **Price, $1.00.**
No. 2—Large enough for 57 classes and 760 scholars, cloth, **Price, $1.25.**

NOTE—No. 1 has space for marking weekly attendance of all scholars and both have blank form for Home Department reports.

Meigs' International "Home Department" Superintendents' Record

Capacity, 25 Visitors, 16 Districts, 15 to 25 "Classes" and 375 members.

No. A—Bound in flexible, heavy pasteboard covers, **Price, 50 cents.**
No. B—Same book, but bound in substantial cloth covers, **Price, 75 cents.**

The above books are now in use in nearly every State in the Union, and have been adopted as the standard books by many of the State Sunday-School associations. Sent postpaid on receipt of price.

THE BOBBS-MERRILLL COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, U. S. A.

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California

James G. Hurst
MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Presented by
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

James G. Hurst
MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Presented by
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Library of
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California